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THE ENGLAND
OF QUEEN ANNE

by

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THE ENGLAND OF QUEEN ANNE

CHAPTER I

THE story of the reign of Queen Anne is no parochial theme. It involves great issues, moves among brilliant societies, and reveals distant landscapes. Whoever writes of the England of that day must show Marlborough's many-coloured columns winding along the banks of Rhine, Danube and Maas ; English fleets heaving on Mediterranean and Biscayan waters, or coasting the West Indian islands and the misty Newfoundland shore ; Gibraltar's rock rising into azure above unwonted smoke and uproar ; envoys posting over land and ocean with Godolphin's gold and Marlborough's persuasive counsel to half the Courts of Europe from Lisbon to Moscow ; nearer home, the fashionable arena of sedan chairs and glass coaches between St. James's Palace and the Parliament House, the battle ground of political and literary intrigue in the days of

Swift, Addison and Pope—with Wren's dome in the distance still rising to its completion above the masts of the river, and beyond it the Tower, the workshop of Newton as Master of the Mint.

But all these fine doings had their roots amid homely scenes. Marlborough's war, like other wars,

— Moved by her two main nerves, iron and gold.

And those sinews of Britain's strength were forged in humbler surroundings than the world of patched cheeks and full-bottomed wigs. So too the game of politics played by Sarah Churchill and Mrs. Masham, Bolingbroke and the Lords of the Junto, was set and decided by the needs and prejudices of common folk in manor house and village, in port and market town. The island must first be surveyed if we would understand Westminster or St. James's, Blenheim or Utrecht.

When a survey is demanded of Queen Anne's island, of its everyday life far distant from the Mall and yet farther from the sound of war, our thoughts turn to Daniel Defoe, riding solitary on that very quest. It was one of his tasks to traverse Britain on tours of observation ; in the evenings, at his journey's end, he wrote his report on local opinion to his employer, Robert

Harley, a mystery-man like himself, and a lover of exact information secretly given. On Sundays he would attend the Dissenters' Chapel, not unobservant of his fellow-worshippers and their business affairs. For besides being a trader, he was a Nonconformist, not indeed of the type laden with the proverbial conscience, for Defoe could be all things to all men, but a Puritan in his preference for solid work and homespun to fashionable display. Like Cobbett who rode and wrote about England a hundred years after him, he was a realist and a man of the people, but he was not, like his successor, half blinded by rage against the powers that be. For the age of Anne was the prelude to a long era of content, and Defoe, more than Swift, was the typical man of his day. Defoe, the trader, hailed the advent of the era of business prosperity, as heartily as Cobbett, the disinherited yeoman, bewailed the rural past. He first perfected the art of the reporter; even his novels are imaginary 'reports' of daily life, whether on a desert island or in a thieves' den. So then, the account that this man gives of the England of Anne's reign is for the historian a treasure indeed. For Defoe was one of the first who saw the old world through a pair of sharp modern eyes. His report can be

controlled and enlarged by great masses of other evidence, but it occupies the central point of our thought and vision.¹

Now this picture of England, drawn by Defoe in much wealth of prosaic detail, leaves the impression of a healthy national life, in which town and country, agriculture, industry and commerce were harmonious parts of a single economic system. Much indeed of the administrative machinery of government, particularly of the 'poor decayed borough towns' which Defoe despised, was antiquarian lumber too religiously preserved. As yet no cry was raised for Reform, because the principle of freedom then peculiar to England enabled individual enterprise to flourish, and new shoots to push up through the old jungle. The Bumbledom of that day could not suppress the economic initiative native to the island soil.

The England so ordered was prosperous and in the main contented even in time of war, partly indeed owing to good harvests and cheap food in the first half of Anne's reign. Industry,

¹ He published it in the reign of George I, but the tours on which he based his observations were largely taken in the early and middle years of Anne. The first edition of the *Tour through Great Britain* (1724-27) has been edited and republished by Mr. Cole in 1927.

agriculture and commerce were all expanding their operations, and society was moving forward unconsciously towards the Industrial Revolution, which grew in the next hundred years out of the conditions described by Defoe. Overseas trade ; water-carriage up the rivers, particularly of coal ; sheep-farming and the cloth trade ; the national marketing of corn and agricultural products by wholesale dealers—on these things he lays stress, and it was these things that enabled the squires to pay the land-tax, the mainstay of the Marlborough wars. They grumbled but they paid, till the war was won, when they sent the Whigs about their business and made peace.

It is true that these rural squires over their October ale cursed the monied men and traders as economic parasites, war-profiters, Dissenters, and would-be intruders into political life which was the proper sphere of the landed interest alone. But economically the activities of these undesirables doubled the rent of many a squire, as indeed he was partly aware. And the Act of Toleration, though scarcely to be mentioned without a groan over degenerate times, gave riches as well as quiet to the countryside.

In the reign of Anne the old way of life for peasant and craftsman was still carried on, but

under conditions peculiarly favourable. The enterprise of trader and middleman was finding new markets for the products of the peasant's and the craftsman's toil, and had already done much to relieve their mediæval poverty without as yet destroying their rustic simplicity of manners. Money made in trade was constantly put into land by improving landlords, who had won or enlarged their fortunes as mercantile investors. This interplay of the activity of town and country, not yet subversive of the old social order, gave to Queen Anne's England a fundamental harmony and strength, below the surface of the fierce distracting antagonisms of sect and faction.

While religion divided, trade united the nation, and trade was gaining in relative importance. The Bible had now a rival in the Ledger. The Puritan, sixty years back, had been Cromwell, sword in hand; thirty years back, Bunyan, singing hymns in gaol; but in Anne's reign the Puritan was to be found in the tradesman-journalist Defoe. The Quaker, too, had ceased to prophesy in public against steeple houses, and had become a thrifty dealer, studying to be quiet. For old sake's sake, Puritans and Quakers were still called 'fanatics' in common parlance. But if there were 'fanatics' at large,

one of them surely was that 'Justice Bradgate' who 'rode a horseback into the Meeting House' at Lutterworth and told the preacher he lied. Yet that zeal of the High Churchmen was perpetually being tempered by patriotic and economic considerations that worked strongly in the minds of the Moderate Tories, led by Harley, whose secret servant was this same Defoe. Here then was an island which, with luck and good leading, might in wartime display enough unity, wealth and vigour to bring to his knees the mighty Louis, the undisputed lord of nobles and poor peasants, who had got rid of his Non-conformists once for all by revoking the Edict of Nantes.

A bird's-eye view of England in Anglo-Saxon times would have revealed a shaggy wilderness of forest trees, brushwood, marsh and down, spreading from shore to shore, but slowly shrinking at ten thousand points where agricultural and pastoral clearings were gaining on the wild. Each clearing had its hamlet of wooden huts, and each hamlet was linked to the next by tracks meandering through the forest. The whole land was traversed by straight Roman roads gradually falling into disuse, and by rivers winding through

undrained swamp and forest, their solitude sometimes broken by the transit of a war-galley or a laden barge, or by the rise of a town beside some notable ford.

Very different is the prospect viewed by the airman to-day. He looks down upon a chess-board of rectangular fields divided by hedges or stone-walls, and dotted with well-built farms, villages and fenced plantations of trees. But the green area is diminished by the creeping smoke-pall and the red and grey house-tops of industrial districts, already covering a substantial acreage of the island. The whole scene is overlaid by a network of busy railways and busier roads ; but on river or canal little traffic appears save near the harbours of the sea.

Half way in character, though not half way in time, between these two very different scenes, lay the panorama of the England of Queen Anne. The bulk of the primæval forest had already disappeared. But the general aspect of the country, particularly south of Thames, was rich in woodland and coppice. The greater part of the acreage of the land south of the Pennines and east of the Welsh moorlands had already been reclaimed as arable or as pasture. It had not, however, as yet acquired the rectangular chess-

board pattern, for the best agricultural lands of central England were still cultivated in open fields without hedges, while the enclosed lands that lay thickest to west and to south-east, were divided up into irregularly shaped orchards and intakes. Straight lines were not prominent in the landscape. The Roman roads had for the most part gone to grass long ago, or had been broken up by the plough. But the winding Saxon bridle tracks had become muddy roads and lanes, threaded all the year round by strings of pack-horses and by solitary riders, and in summer time by waggons and coaches moving at a foot's pace. The rivers flowed through rich cornfields and meadows from one prosperous market town to another, bearing on their waterways the heaviest traffic of the land. The industrial areas, except great London, were hardly as yet of a size to be distinguishable in the landscape, amid the gardens, trees and pleasure grounds that crowded close round every town of importance. The industrial life of that day was scattered widely over the island; it was absorbed as an integral part of the life of village and country town. To a bird's-eye view England might have looked like a purely agricultural land, had not the bristling masts in every river-mouth

and harbour told a tale of other activities than those of the peasant.

The disappearance of the primæval self-sowing forests of England exercised the minds of the subjects of Queen Anne. Though there were many more trees then than now, men were more troubled by their decrease because they were less accustomed to trust to foreign supply for the first needs of life. And timber was then required for several essential purposes where it has since been replaced by iron and by coal. The Royal Navy and the mercantile marine were then built of wood ; iron was smelted by wood-charcoal¹ ; and the domestic hearth had to be kept alight by faggots, in those many regions in which neither peat nor coal could be delivered on account of the badness of the roads.

boiling on a fire always supplied by a bush of furze, and that to be the only fuel to dress a joint of meat and broth.' This was at Penzance, where the sea-borne supply of coal from the South Welsh mines had been cut off by French privateers hovering off the Land's End; the more fortunate north coast of Cornwall, she tells us, still obtained coal from across the Bristol Channel even in time of war.¹ About the same date, Edmund Gibson, the antiquarian and future Bishop, in his edition of Camden's *Britannia*, commented on the words which the Elizabethan had written a hundred years before as to the Oxfordshire hills, 'clad with woods'; 'this is so much altered,' writes Gibson, 'by the late civil wars that few places except the Chiltern country can answer that character at present. For fuel is in those parts so scarce that 'tis commonly sold by weight, not only at Oxford, but other towns in the northern parts of the shire.'

The magnificent national inheritance of the royal forests had in Stuart times been alienated by

¹ *Through England on a Side Saddle, The Diary of Celia Fiennes*, 1888, pp. 221-223. This delightful and important record was composed on tours made partly in the reign of William III, partly in that of Anne. Miss Fiennes was a lady of means and a Dissenter. She was sister of the Third Viscount of Saye and Sele. She travelled for pleasure and curiosity.

Anne in front of St. Paul's were said to be one of the last products of the old Sussex ironworks.

But the timber of England and Wales, though scanty as compared to the wealth of remoter ages and the needs of the actual time, was still very *extensive as compared to the present day*. When Anne came to the throne, it was reckoned that, only ten miles north of Cheapside, there were growing more than half a million fine oak and beech, sheltering the deer of Enfield Chase. Throughout the island, even the best cultivated districts were thickly sprinkled with heaths, copses, dingles, hawthorn brakes and natural groves, the haunt of the highwayman, the gypsy and the whole tribe of Autolycus, bird-haunted sanctuaries of old romance, destined to be closed and ploughed up in the coming century and a half of agricultural progress.

The straits to which the Admiralty was put to obtain oaks of requisite size for the dockyards of Plymouth, Portsmouth, Chatham and Woolwich were not due to the entire exhaustion of English timber in the aggregate, but to the difficulty of tapping reserves in out-of-the-way districts, par-

the neighbourhood of water-carriage. On a road close to Chatham dockyard he saw a team of two-and-twenty oxen tugging at a single oak. The expense and difficulty were very great of moving heavy trees of the battleship type over any considerable distance of the unmetalled roadways. The ironworks could move from Sussex to Shropshire in chase of the vanishing forest, but the dockyards must remain on the coasts opposite to Europe. For these reasons the Admiralty was fain, partially and most unwillingly, to turn to Baltic and American supply, which could be brought straight from the felling-grounds by water.

The mercantile and fishing marine was already accustomed to purchase most of its timber abroad. Moreover its lighter vessels could be built of English trees of the smaller kind, which were of no use for the great battleships. The timber of Berkshire was floated down the Thames from Reading to London, where it was bought up to build the merchant fleet. Only the great East Indiamen, themselves veritable warships, seriously competed with the Royal Navy for the best English oaks.

The demand for hemp, tar and timber, above all for the tall, straight fir-tree masts that could

for royal monopoly, and the marked trees disappeared by thousands from the unpatrollable wilderness. Nevertheless, it can be safely asserted that in Anne's reign one of the chief reasons why the colonies were valued by the statesmen and coffee-house politicians of England was as a sure source of supply for the needs of the navy.

Less than a hundred years after the accession of Queen Anne the people of England had acquired an invincible prejudice against eating any bread save wheat ; even for purposes of poor relief, under the ' Speenhamland system ' begun in 1795, wheat prices alone were used as the basis of calculation. Yet in every century before the eighteenth, the bread of the great majority of our ancestors had been rye, barley, oats, or else one of these mixed with wheat ; in England, as in all the lands of northern Europe, pure wheat bread had been regarded as a luxury proper to the rich. It was only under the Georges that wheat became the staple diet. That defiance of the natural economy of our climate was achieved by means of large farming and the application of capital and capitalistic methods to the cultivation of the soil. If England had remained a land of small peasants, she would not, any more than Germany or

Scandinavia, have grown any large proportion of wheat.

In the reign of Anne English agriculture had improved so far that already more wheat was grown than in mediæval times. Wheat was reckoned at thirty-eight per cent. of the bread of the whole population ; rye came next, barley and oats a good third and fourth. Prices were therefore quoted in terms of wheat and rye.

But wheat formed a much smaller proportion of the actual corn grown than of the bread baked, because enormous crops of barley were produced all over the island to make malt for ale. Cambridgeshire, for example, outside the grassy level of the drained fens, was 'almost wholly a corn country' and, as Defoe observed, 'of that corn five parts in six is barley, which is generally sold at Ware and Royston and other great malting towns of Hertfordshire.' Except in the cider counties of the West, ale had been unchallenged in former ages as the native drink of English men, women and children at every meal, and it was only beginning to feel the rivalry of strong spirits on the one hand and of tea and coffee on the other. It was still the drink of ladies. In 1705 Lady Carnarvon imputed the fact that Miss Coke was 'extremely fallen away and her voice

weak and inward ' to ' her having had stale beer all this summer.'

Not only did barley everywhere provide the staple drink, but in some districts it provided the staple food. The small farmers of the Welsh hills supplied themselves with an excellent barley bread. The peasantry of the northern counties consumed oats and rye in various forms ; and in Scotland, oats ' supported the people,' as Dr. Johnson was still able to assert many years later. In the central districts of England, rye and barley divided honours with wheat, and only in the drier climate of the south-east could wheat be said to preponderate.

But already in the reign of Anne a great interchange of agricultural products was going on between one district and another, especially where river traffic was available. Largely for this reason the deepening of rivers and the making of locks was a movement specially characteristic of the period, two generations before the era of Bridgewater's artificial canals.¹ The Thames all

¹ The *Statutes*, and the *Commons Journals* for Anne's reign, as well as local histories, afford abundant evidence of this. One case may be quoted for all : in 1699 the inhabitants of Wisbech and neighbourhood (North Cambs.) petition the House of Commons to have the River Lark made navigable, as the roads are impracticable, and their district which itself produces only butter, cheese and oats, is supplied with wheat, rye and malt from

the way down from Oxford, and its affluents the Wey, the Lea and the Medway, were the scenes of an animated and crowded traffic—food, drink and timber going down to London, and Tyneside coal and overseas products going up-country in return. Abingdon and Reading were each the emporium of a great agricultural district, of which they dispatched the produce by water to the capital. The coasts of Sussex and Hampshire sent their corn, Cheshire and other western counties sent their cheese, by sea to London, running the gauntlet of the French privateers from Dunkirk. The roads were often too soft for waggons, but in most weathers the sheep and cattle, the geese and turkeys of the northern and midland shires could be driven to the capital, grazing as they went. Even before the Union, Scotland sent 30,000 head of cattle a year into England; the strange speech of the Welsh drovers was familiar on the roads near London; only the Irish cattle-trade had been killed by an Act of the reign of Charles II, a sacrifice to the jealousy of English breeders.

Suffolk (*Watson's History of Wisbech*, 1827, p. 385). Among the rivers at this period deepened and supplied with proper locks were the Bristol Avon, the Yorkshire Derwent, the Stour and the Cam 'from Clayhithe Ferry to the Queen's Mill' in Cambridge (*Statutes of the Realm*, VIII, pp. 56–59, 172–178; *Barrett's Bristol*, p. 697).

England and Wales already formed the most considerable area in Europe for internal free trade, to which Scotland was added in 1707. ' 'Tis our great felicity in England,' wrote Defoe, ' that we are not yet come to a *gabelle* or tax upon corn, as in Italy, and many other countries.' The shrewd Venetian envoy, Mocenigo, at the end of his residence in our island, reported to his masters in 1706 that freedom from internal *douanes* was one reason why ' industry was further advanced in England than in any other part of the world.' London and every provincial city was an open market for provisions, with no toll taken at the gate. Favoured by this freedom, the corn-factors and middlemen of agriculture pervaded the whole island, buying up on speculation the farmers' crops as they grew in the field, or as they lay unthreshed in the barn ; penetrating to the most unlikely places, even to dangerous Highland straths, amid claymores and Jacobites, in search of cattle to be fattened in English parks ; everywhere forwarding the movement towards agricultural progress by opening new markets for the produce of remote estates and hamlets.

Under this regime of enterprise and improvement England was sending corn overseas on a

large scale. Since the Revolution the government had paid bounties on its export. In the middle of Anne's reign the employees of the Gloucestershire coal trade rose in revolt against the high price of corn, due to the scale on which the Bristol merchants shipped the local supply abroad. And even north of Trent, homely squires were calculating on sales abroad as an important item in their own and their tenants' fortunes.¹

Nevertheless, this cheerful picture of agricultural and distributive activity must not delude us into imagining that England under Queen Anne was already the land of improved agriculture and reformed traffic that it became by the end of the century. The busy life of the rivers was a measure of the badness of the roads. The best cornlands in England—the midlands, Lincoln and Norfolk—were still for the most part unenclosed. In those regions the vast and hedgeless

¹ In July 1709 Robert Molesworth writes to his wife from Edlington, near Doncaster: 'If God sends good harvest weather, there will be a very great store of corn in the kingdom, and yet such are the wants abroad that it is likely to bear a very good price for several years to come. This must enrich our farmers.' And next year he writes: 'Corn must certainly rise in the price and that very suddenly, for the plague, which is got into the Baltic, will make soon both us and the Dutch to prohibit all trade there and then the Dutch must be furnished with corn from us.'

'village field' was still being cultivated on the mediæval methods of three-course agriculture, that would have won the approval of a Domesday commissioner, but were destined to shock the modern intelligence of an Arthur Young.

The initiative of an improving landlord or farmer was closely circumscribed on these 'village fields,' wherein the scattered strips of individual owners had perforce to be cultivated on the plan laid down for the whole community. The Manorial Court might be in decay, but less formal village meetings still regulated the commonfield agriculture, the use of the town's plough, the rules of gleaning, the common herd, and the pasturage on common and waste. A country town like Godmanchester still employed its bailiffs to summon all the farmers to appear, according to old custom, at the Court Hall, where they 'did agree that none should sow barley in the commonfield before Friday, 21st March (1700), and that day only headlands.'

More initiative and therefore more progress was possible, though by no means inevitable, on the enclosed portion of a squire's demesne farm, and in the enclosed lands of southern, western and northern England. But the districts where enclosure was commonest were on the average

the less productive parts of the island, with the worst climate. It is true that Kentish hop-fields and west country orchards and fruit-gardens must be reckoned among the lands of early enclosure, but so must the intakes amid the weatherbeaten moorlands of west and north. Most of the best cornlands of the midlands and East Anglia were still unenclosed.

Since many of the sheep and cattle were fed on heaths and commons, and without the aid of roots or artificial grasses, they were pitifully small and thin. Their weight at Smithfield market in 1710 was less than half that of ordinary sheep and cattle in 1795. At the beginning of the century the difficulty of keeping beasts alive in winter was still so great that, when they came off the summer grass, a very large proportion had to be slaughtered and salted. When the price of salt rose in 1703 the House of Commons was petitioned, on the ground that it was 'a grievance to the poorer sort of people who mostly feed on salted provisions.'

The days of Lord Townshend's turnip-fields and Coke of Norfolk's fat sheep and cattle were still in the future. But already the Wiltshire and Cotswold uplands, that bred sheep for the western wool-clothiers, were a wonder to behold. 'On the pleasant downs' within a six-mile radius of

Dorchester, Defoe was informed that more than half a million sheep were feeding ; and he noted that on Salisbury Plain and the Dorset Downs the land was becoming so much enriched by the folding of sheep with pens in a new place every night, that the chalk lands thus manured, though hitherto fit for nothing but pasture, were rapidly coming under the plough.

Ever since Tudor times, and more particularly since the Restoration, there had flowed from the press an ever broadening stream of books on improved methods of agriculture. The spirit of scientific enquiry emanating from the regions of the Royal Society into the walks of common life, was a constant stimulant but often a sore puzzle to the practical farmer. For the experts and modernizers were so seldom agreed. Jethro Tull, the great improver who introduced the drill and the horse-hoe into his own farming operations in the course of Anne's reign, was quite wrong on many other points, as subsequent controversies showed. But men were on the look out to adapt new methods as soon as they had proved themselves—especially where enclosed ground gave liberty for change.

With the idea of agricultural improvement thus in the air, the movement for the enclosure

of commons and heaths was not only practised, as it had been for centuries, but was preached by modern theorists as a duty to the commonwealth. When Anne came to the throne agricultural writers were denouncing the commons as 'seminaries of a lazy, thieving sort of people,' whose sheep were 'poor, tattered and poisoned with rot,' and whose heath-fed cattle were 'starved, todbellied runts, neither fit for the dairy nor the yoke.' Here already we have in full blast the famous controversy as to the social value of rights on the common, in which Cobbett a hundred years later was protagonist of the defeated commoners. On the merits of that dispute the historians of our own day are still divided. In Anne's reign there was not yet much enclosure done by Act of Parliament, but enclosure was going forward under the common law by agreement or otherwise.¹

¹ In the summer when Marlborough was marching to Blenheim, a Yorkshire squire was writing to his wife :

'The law in England is (as I know now by experience) that every freeholder can enclose so much of his common as lies upon him (much more a lord of a considerable land), provided he leaves out as much common as is sufficient for those that have right, and disclaims any further title to put beasts on the rest of the common which he leaves out. This is the instance of Mr. Fretwell, of Hellaby, our neighbour, who carried it even against the Lord Castleton, who is lord of the manor, upon trial. And this is our case between us and Cunsborough.'

This old rural England, on the eve of the wholesale enclosures and the industrial revolution, is often presented to the mind's eye of posterity in one or other of two rival pictures. On the one hand we are asked to contemplate a land of independent and self-respecting peasants, most of them attached to the soil by small personal rights therein, contented with the country quiet and felicity which have been since destroyed, and celebrating their rural happiness in alehouse songs about 'Harvesthome,' which we have promoted to the drawing-room ; and the same land, we are reminded, was also the land of craftsmen in village and market town, not divorced from rural pleasures because they pursued industry, using tools instead of watching machines, and therefore enjoying in their daily work the delight of the individual artist, for which a poor substitute is found in the feverish excitement of our modern amusements, organized *en masse* as a counterpoise to the dullness of mechanical and clerical toil. On the other hand we are shown the opposing picture : we are asked to remember the harsh backbreaking labour of the pre-mechanical ages, continued for thirteen or more hours in the day ; child-labour instead of primary schools ; disease and early death uncon-

trolled by medical science or hospital provision ; and absence of cleanliness and comforts which we now regard as necessities ; neglectful and unimaginative harshness not only to criminals and debtors but too often to women, children and the poor at large ; and finally a population of little more than five and a half millions in England and Wales, less well fed than the present population of more than seven times that number.¹

Confirmation of both these pictures emerges from a study of the period. But which picture contains the greater and more important body of truth it is hazardous to pronounce, partly because the dispute is about intangible values—we cannot put ourselves back into the minds of our ancestors, and if we could we should still be puzzled ; partly also because even where statistics would help, statistics are not to be had. It is true that, a dozen years before Queen Anne's accession, the able publicist Gregory King made a calculation from the hearth tax and other data of the probable numbers in various classes of the community. The figures he gave represent a shrewd guess, no more. They will indeed serve negatively as a check on the enthusiasm of the

¹ See note p. 128, below, on statistics of population.

laudator temporis acti, by recalling the fact that, even before the great enclosures and the industrial revolution, the number of farmers and yeomen was relatively small, and the numbers of the agricultural proletariat large. By far the two largest classes in King's analysis of the nation are the 'cottagers and paupers' and the 'labouring people and outservants.' The former represent, we may suppose, those who attempted to be independent of wages and according to King made a very poor business of the attempt. Yet those who picked up a living off the common whereon they had squatted, or off the small field they owned behind their hovel, may have been happier than King knew, even if they were poorer than is realized by modern idealizers of the past. King's second large class, the 'labouring people and outservants,' are the wage-earners. But many of them had also some rights on the common, some garden or tiny holding which added to the interest and dignity of life, without entitling the owner to the proud rank of English yeoman. Even the servants of industry had many of them small gardens or plots of land to till in their off hours, especially the woollen weavers in all parts of the island. On the stony heights around Halifax each clothworker had 'a cow or

two' in a field walled off on the steep hillside whereon his cottage stood.

On the other hand there were very large numbers of employees both in agriculture and industry who had no rights in land and no means of subsistence but their wages.

The wages in agriculture and in industry were supposed to be regulated by schedules issued for each county by the Justices of the Peace, who also occasionally set a limit to the price at which certain goods might be sold. These schedules did not pretend to fix either wages or prices exactly, but only to set a maximum which was not to be surpassed. Variations were therefore permissible inside every county, as well as differences between one shire and the next. Moreover the maximum announced was very often transgressed in practice.¹

Judging by negative evidence, we may conclude that concerted strikes and combinations to

¹ Wages differed from one estate to another; in 1701 a Yorkshire squire wrote:

'The wages of a good husbandman in the parts about Barnsley and Wortley I find to be no more than £3 a year, and Sir Godfrey gives his keeper but £3 14s., and his bailiff £4, so that we are worse served for high wages. About Wortley all the husbandmen are up every morning with their beasts at three o'clock, and in our house they lie abed till near seven. But above all Warne's £20 vexes me.'

That year, we should remember, wheat stood as low as 34s. a quarter and other grain in proportion, and chickens could be bought in the West Riding at twopence apiece.

raise wages were not common. They could be punished under then existing laws, long before the celebrated Combination Acts of the younger Pitt. In 1706 the Leeds Quarter Sessions heavily fined six cloth drawers who had combined not to work except for three-halfpence an hour in place of the current penny an hour. The Elizabethan Statute of Artificers, that was still partially in force, penalized the leaving of work unfinished, as well as the giving or taking of wages above the maximum fixed by the Justices of the Peace. But the maximum was often exceeded when excess payment was to the interest of both employer and employed. If there was little or no trade-unionism, there was much individual bargaining about wages.

Even when the low prices are taken into account, some of the wages paid seem low by modern standards.¹ But they were high by comparison with the Europe of that day. The national characteristic of Englishmen, then as now, was not thrift but insistence on a high

¹ Truck payments were a common abuse. The establishment of a sound currency in William III's reign had indeed set some limits to it. But still farmers and bailiffs often 'compelled the poor labourers to take corn and other provisions instead of their hire, and that in such quantities that they cannot spend the same in their own families.'

standard of life. Defoe, writing as an employer, declared that :

Good husbandry is no English virtue. English labouring people eat and drink, especially the latter, three times as much in value as any sort of foreigners of the same dimensions in the world.

A Dutchman, he declared, lived well and provided for his family on a wage which meant misery to the improvident Englishman. It is to be noted that in this pamphlet Defoe speaks of the English labourer as earning nine shillings a week, a rate greatly in advance of that of the Quarter Session schedules. He declares that he himself ' offered nine shillings per week to stowling fellows at my door, and they have frequently told me to my face they could get more a begging, and I once met a lusty fellow in the stocks for making the experiment.' Nor is this the only evidence that, in spite of the attempted control by Quarter Sessions, wages varied greatly from place to place.

Defoe's extortionate beggar is a type known in every age, and that period was not, upon the whole, propitious to him. Indeed many wanderers for work were more sinned against than sinning. The monstrous Act of Settlement of the Poor, passed in 1662 in one of the lightest moods

of Charles II's Cavalier Parliament, was still in operation unamended. By this Act every parish in which a man settled could send him back to the parish of which he was native, for fear that if he stayed in his new abode he might at some future date become chargeable on the rates. Nine-tenths of the people of England, all in fact who did not belong to a small class of landowners, were liable to be expelled from any parish save their own, with every circumstance of arrest and ignominy, however good their character and even if they had secured remunerative work. The panic fear of some parish authorities lest newcomers should some day fall on the rates, caused them to exercise this unjust power in quite unnecessary cases. The Act placed a check upon the fluidity of labour and was as much an outrage as the Press-gang itself on the boasted freedom of Englishmen. Yet it was seldom denounced until Adam Smith dealt with it in scathing terms. It is hard to ascertain the exact degree to which it operated, and Adam Smith appears to have exaggerated the harm done and the number of cases in which cruel wrong was inflicted. But at best it was a great evil ; it is the reverse side of that creditable effort of Tudor and Stuart England to provide for the maintenance of the

poor through the local public authorities. That effort, on the whole, was not unsuccessful, and largely accounts for the peaceable character of English society.

In Anne's reign the parish provision for the poor chargeable on the rate was being very generally supplemented and softened by the establishment of Almshouses through private benefaction. The keelmen of the Tyneside coal trade contributed among themselves to build a hospital for their aged and sick members at a cost of £2000. But more usually almshouses and schemes for the employment of the workless were endowed by well-to-do men and women anxious to provide for their less fortunate neighbours. The age of Anne was very generous in foundations of this type, as well as in the establishment of Charity Schools.

But besides private beneficence, public policy, financed out of the local rates, was constantly establishing new workhouses and enlarging the 'parish stock' of materials to give employment. When Anne came to the throne almost a quarter of the population was occasionally in receipt of parochial relief, and the poor rate stood at about £800,000 a year. It increased to a million a year before she died, but fell below £700,000 in the

reign of George II, owing to better times and to the application of the workhouse test. There was much to criticize in the English Poor Law, especially the Law of Settlement, but at least there was an effective system of public relief and therefore England was not shamed, at the end of the great struggle with France, by scenes such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu noticed on her travels in 1718 :

I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery, and all the country villages of France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with such miserable starved faces, and thin tattered clothes, they need no other eloquence. This is all the French magnificence till you come to Fontainebleau.

Not only our parliamentary liberties but also, with all its faults, the English Poor Law stood between us and the social revolution towards which Louis XIV's famed system of despotism in Church and State was leading the French nation.

The Yeoman was not a figure characteristic of mediæval society, which rested on the two bases of the serf and his lord. But with the gradual emancipation of the villeins in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, the yeoman had come to the front in the English scene. He

flourished under Tudor and Stuart, when the number of small landowners and of large farmers was multiplied, in spite of some local destruction of peasant households by enclosure in early Tudor times. The praise of the English yeoman in prose and verse is a favourite *motif* of our literature from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century.

The reign of Anne was the culminating point of the fortunes of the English freehold yeomen, before their decline began, and it was no ill time for the still rising fortunes of the tenant farmers.¹ The freehold yeomen were reckoned at about one-eighth of the population of the country, and the substantial tenant farmers at a little less; it was believed that the freehold yeoman was on the average a richer man than the tenant farmer.²

¹ Until the later eighteenth century the word 'yeoman' was used to include the substantial tenant farmer as well as the freehold cultivator. In the most famous of all descriptions of the yeoman class, Hugh Latimer, preaching before Edward VI, states that his 'yeoman' father farmed another man's land.

² In 1633 Gregory King had calculated that there were over one million three hundred thousand households in England and Wales, of which 160,000 (or 180,000) were families of freehold cultivators with incomes ranging from £55 to £91 a year; while 150,000 families of tenant farmers enjoyed incomes averaging just over £42 a year; and that 15,000 gentry and squires had incomes ranging from £280 to £450, without reckoning the titled folk and the larger landed proprietors. In the reign of Anne it is probable that the average income of the various classes was appreciably larger.

It is exceedingly difficult to put these incomes into terms of

38 FREEHOLDERS AND POLITICS

A hundred years later the opposite was probably the case, in so far as the freehold yeoman any longer existed. For in the Georgian era of agricultural improvements, the tenant farmer had the benefit of his landlord's capital poured into his land, while the small freeholder had no financial resources save his own with which to keep abreast of the times. But Anne's reign was perhaps a moment of no very marked economic difference between the two types of yeoman.

The difference was political and social. The freeholder had a vote for Parliament and was often in a position to use it as he liked. The tenant farmer had no vote, and if he had, he would have been obliged to cast it for his landlord. Even the ideal landlord, Sir Roger de Coverley, was represented by Addison to an approving world as exercising over his tenants an absolute, patriarchal sway.

But the independence of the freehold yeoman was deeply cherished and stoutly maintained. In the election correspondence of country gentlemen we meet such expressions as 'The freeholders

present-day money. How much has the value of money declined? On the one hand the price of wheat stands not very far from the average of Anne's reign. On the other hand, many articles to-day cost five, ten, twenty or thirty times what they cost then.

do not stick to say they will show their liberty in voting.' The squire, who had everyone else under his thumb, was for that reason often disposed to buy out the freehold yeoman, and, as the century went on, many freeholders were ready, on fair terms, to quit the countryside, in which their old independence was threatened by the increasing wealth of the large landlord and his tenant farmers.

But in Anne's reign the 180,000 cultivating freeholders enumerated by King, were still the class upon whose unforced and unpurchased support the structure of Church and State mainly rested, like the Ark on Ararat, in the staggering times that followed the great upheaval and backwash of the Revolution. The nicely adjusted balance of Whig and Tory interests was maintained or redressed at each successive election in the Queen's reign by the divided opinions of the 'forty-shilling freeholders,' most of them yeoman agriculturists. The 'forty-shilling freehold' was the basis of the uniform Parliamentary franchise in every shire of England and Wales. On the other hand, in the towns privileged to return members, the varying and eccentric methods of election—sometimes by the Corporation, sometimes by a section of the inhabitants—rendered

40 FREEHOLDERS AND PARTRIDGES

many 'rotten boroughs' the political property of single grandees, or laid them open to a competition of influence and bribery. The freehold yeomen of the counties were therefore the class of voter with whom at election time genuine political considerations went farthest, and cajolery and intimidation least far ; just as, in a former generation, Cavalier and Roundhead had recruited their best cavalry from the same class by other means than drink-money.

But even more than politics, partridges caused squire and yeoman to look at one another askance. The squirarchical legislation of later Stuart Parliaments had excluded all freeholders of under a hundred pounds a year—that is to say the very great majority of the class—from killing game, even on their own land. Thus many poor families had been robbed of many good meals that were theirs by right ; and even those few yeomen whose wealth raised them above the reach of this remarkable law, were for that reason regarded with suspicion. The best that even the good-hearted Sir Roger can bring himself to say of the 'yeoman of about a hundred pounds a year,' 'who is just within the Game Act,' is that 'he would be a good neighbour if he did not destroy

so many partridges'—that is to say upon his own land.

For many generations to come, grave social consequences were to flow from the excessive eagerness of the country gentlemen about the preservation of game. Their anxieties on that score had grown with the adoption of the shot-gun. During the Stuart epoch shooting had gradually superseded hawking, with the result that birds were more rapidly destroyed, and the supply no longer seemed inexhaustible. In Anne's reign it was already not unusual to 'shoot flying.' But it was regarded as a difficult art, the more so as it was sometimes practised from horseback. But the 'perching' of pheasants by stalking and shooting them as they sat on the boughs, was still customary among gentlemen. Netting birds on the ground was a fashionable sport, often carried on over dogs who pointed the game in the long grass. It is written that Sir Roger 'in his youthful days had *taken* forty coveys of partridges in a season,' probably by this means. 'Liming' by twigs, snaring and trapping birds of all kinds, not only pheasants and wild duck but thrushes and field-fares, had still a prominent place in *manuals of The Gentleman's Recreation*. To lure wild duck into a decoy upon the water

business or curiosity caused to ride up the steep stony tracks beyond Windermere and over Hardknot, complained of the bread of the Lake Valleys as 'exceedingly black, coarse and harsh,' and the houses as 'sad little huts' of unmortared stone, more fit for cattle than for men. But already 'here and there there was a house plastered' and sometimes the 'oat clap bread' was cunningly baked and delicious. We may conclude from these travellers' impressions that the great improvement in the prosperity, the farm-building and the furniture of this happy region was by no means complete in the reign of Anne. But already the famous Windermere delicacy, 'the fish called charrs, came potted to London.'

In the neighbouring county of Northumberland, recently so warlike and barbarous, the travellers along the coast and in the valley of the South Tyne, found 'plenty of good bread and beer' as well as hens and geese, and famous stocks of claret, no doubt on account of the neighbourhood of Scotland where the gentry imported claret from France in spite of the war. When Anne came to the throne, there was still a 'County Keeper' for Northumberland, who drew a salary of £500 in return for making good all cattle stolen and not restored. Although the wild

moorlands between Redesdale and the Roman Wall still had a bad name, the County Keeper had the best of his bargain, and 'was able to inform travellers that the moss-trooping trade is very much laid aside, and that a small sum will recompense all the robberies that are yearly committed in the County.' Peace with Scotland, the wealth of the Tyneside mines, and the trade of Newcastle were factors already raising the *standard of life all along the border*. But the more outlying rural districts of Northumberland were still very poor, though more thickly inhabited than they afterwards became. In many a 'township' now consisting of a single prosperous sheep farm, a cluster of half a dozen cottages of the crofter type then maintained a hardy population of borderers, unused to comfort, and tilling the moorland for a meagre harvest of oats.

In the more southerly districts of England where civilization was of older date, long peace was multiplying the comforts of life. Everywhere that perfectly beautiful equilibrium between man and nature which marked the Eighteenth-Century landscape, was in process of being established. While hedgerow and orchard were gaining on the wild, the multiplication or improvement of cottages, farm-buildings and Halls was going on,

either in old traditional styles, or in that dignified but simple manner which we know as 'Queen Anne.' That style, which seems to us now native English, in its origin owed something to Dutch influence. Nor was the internal decoration unworthy of the architecture: in 1710 a foreign traveller noted that 'now in England tapestry is no longer in fashion, but all is panelled at great cost.' China-ware, brought to Europe by the Dutch and English East India Companies, was a passion with ladies, and we may conceive the scheme of decoration in many Queen Anne mansions in town and country, as blue and white jars in wainscoted recesses, and tall grandfather clocks decorated with lacquered work from the East. Grinling Gibbons was still executing his marvels of woodwork. Mahogany was beginning to come in from the American Indies, and with it the lighter and finer furniture that we associate with Eighteenth-Century taste. Already foreign art dealers were amazed by their opportunities over here, and 'fleeced the English rarely, selling for great sums what they imported for a trifle from France and Italy.' Foreign artists declared that the nobility and gentry over whom Anne reigned had secluded in their country Halls as many pictures by renowned Italian masters as

were to be found in all the Palaces and museums of Rome itself.

Vanbrugh's Blenheim House, with its magnificent conception and doubtful detail, is by no means characteristic of the architecture of Anne's reign. Usually a purer taste prevailed in the realm of ecclesiastical, academic and public buildings, while in ordinary domestic structures the note of the day was 'simple in elegance.' Wren was still alive and active over his London churches and his Hampton Court, and Gibbs was learning that skill which was soon to produce the Radcliffe at Oxford. Together they taught the succeeding generations to 'effect the fusion of classic grace with vernacular energy.' The rules of proportion which these great men laid down, filtering into the text-books commonly used by local architects and builders, prepared for the Eighteenth Century a long and happy period of common English building in hamlet and country town. It was only when, after this school had decayed, and men attempted to restore the architecture of ancient Athens or of the Middle Ages in the Nineteenth Century, that the English tradition was lost, and was succeeded by a hideous anarchy of amateur fancies and exotic modes.

CHAPTER II

THE country gentlemen included many grades of wealth and of culture. At the top of the social hierarchy stood the Duke, who would in any other land have been styled a Prince, and whose manner of life outdid in magnificence the courts of allied monarchs drawing England's pay. At the lower end of the scale was the squire of £300 a year, speaking in the broadest provincial dialect, but distinguished from the yeomen, among whom he *mingled almost on equal terms*, by a small sporting establishment, by a coat of arms, and by the respect which all paid to him as a 'gentleman.' If once in his life he went to London on business, he was noticeable for his horse-hair periwig, his jockey belt and his old-fashioned coat without sleeves. His library, traditionally at least, consisted of the Bible, Baker's Chronicle, Hudibras and Foxe's *Martyrs*, and, whether he read these works or not, his view on Puritans and Papists usually coincided with those expressed in the last two.

But in picturing to ourselves the culture of the country house of that time, we must not forget the grandees filling rural palaces with pictures from Italy, furniture from France, and editions of Italian, French or Latin authors which they not only collected but read—the men whom in the next reign Voltaire contrasted favourably with the French nobles as patrons of letters and science. There were philosopher Lords like young Shaftesbury; scholar statesmen like Somers and Montagu; and the greatest of all antiquarian collectors, Robert Harley, who, when too much engaged as ‘the nation’s great support’ to hunt books and manuscripts himself, still had his private agents everywhere on the look out.¹ The Lords of the Junto and their followers and foes at Westminster and St. James’s prided themselves on being country gentlemen, whether self-made or to the manner born, each with his country seat to which the careworn statesman was ever anxious, at least in theory, to return. When a politician, a lawyer or a war-profiteer had made his fortune at the public expense, he put his money into land and founded a county family.

¹ Something of the organized method by which the great Harleian collection was being built up during the busiest time of Harley’s political engagements can be seen in the *Harleian MSS.* (B.M.) 7526.

The older families, who were mostly Tory, complained of the parvenu families, who were mostly Whig, but the process went on, and rural and urban society were to that extent amalgamated.

The London season was over by the first week in June, when people of fashion dispersed to their country homes or adjourned to Bath. A longer residence in town would have ruined many families who had strained a point to bring their daughters to the London marriage market, while their neighbours were fain to be contented with a county capital, or with the round of such rural visits as ladies could accomplish in the coach in summer, and on the pillion behind their brothers in the muddy lanes at Christmas. The rival claims of town and country are thus celebrated in a popular song of the period :

Good bye to the Mall,
The Park and Canal ; ¹
St. James's Square
And flaunters there :
The gaming house too
Where high dice and low
Are managed by all degrees.
Adieu to the knight
Was bubbled last night,

¹ St. James's Park and the long artificial water in it. The song is from D'Urfey, *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719, I, p. 5.

That keeps a Blouze,
And beats his spouse ;
And now in great haste
To pay what he's lost,
Sends home to cut down his trees.
And well fare the lad
Improves every clod,
That ne'er set his hand
To Bill or to Bond
Nor barter's his flocks
For wine or pox,
To chouse him of half his days.
But fishing and fowling
And hunting and bowling
His pastime is ever and ever.

The natural reply of 'the town' was to harp on the reputation of the rustic gentry for too exclusive a devotion to drinking, hunting and shooting ; and this charge, so generally made, may well be credited, provided we remember that *no description will cover the whole ground*. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a brilliant blue-stocking, in a letter of which the dullest part is a quotation from Tasso, condemns the squires of a certain district of Sussex as 'insensible to other pleasures' than the bottle and the chase. 'The poor female part of the family being seldom permitted a coach, their lords and masters having no occasion for such a machine, as their mornings are spent among the hounds, and their nights

with as beastly companions—with what liquor they can get.' Yet in the same letter she regrets and praises the society of the squires of Northamptonshire. No less real, if more rare, than boorish Squire Western was the learned country gentleman, celebrated in Somerville's sententious lines :

A rural squire, to crowds and courts unknown
In his own cell retired, but not alone ;
For round him view each Greek and Roman sage,
Polite companions of his riper age.

Nevertheless the impression left by turning over many hundreds of letters of the better-to-do gentry of the reign of Anne, is neither that of country scholar nor of country bumpkin. We read the actual thoughts of squires, anxious about their account books, their daughters' marriages and their sons' debts and professions : attending to their own estates, and to the county business on the bench of magistrates, as well as to their hounds and horses ; devoted to their gardens and their ponds a little more than to their books ; living, as we should expect, a wholesome and useful life, half public, half private, wholly leisured, natural and dignified. Many of the better-to-do gentry, as their letters and diaries show, were getting several thousands a year from their estates.

The expenditure required of a country gentleman, rich or poor, was in one respect very small. It was not then considered obligatory that his sons should be sent at great cost to exclusively patrician schools. At the nearest local grammar school, the squire's children sat beside those sons of yeomen and shopkeepers who had been selected for a clerical career ; otherwise the young gentlemen were taught at home by a neighbouring parson, or in wealthier families by the private chaplain. Where a tutor was specially employed, he was often a Huguenot refugee, for the land was full of educated men of this type, welcomed by careful parents for their French, and doubly welcome in Whig families for their sufferings and their principles. Eton, Winchester and Westminster were indeed patronized by many but not by most of the aristocracy. And even at Westminster there could be found at the end of Anne's reign ' houses at which boys pay but £20 a year for boarding, and the schooling but five or six guineas.' It was only in the reign of George I that Harrow began to rise into the rank of the fashionable schools.

It followed that, whereas a gentleman of moderate means in our day often thinks himself obliged to spend a sixth part of his income on

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It followed that, whereas a gentleman of moderate means in our day often thinks himself obliged to spend a sixth part of his income on

the schooling of one boy, he could in those days be satisfied to spend a hundredth. Thus squire Molesworth, at a time when he was drawing a rental of just under £2000, paid £20 a year for each of his sons—including board, instruction, clothes and all charges. His heavy parental liabilities only began when the two lads left school, and the younger went into the army. Then indeed 'Dick must be furnished with a hundred pounds or he cannot stir a step. He has both horses, clothes and equipage to buy.' As 'he was not in the list of officers slain in the late glorious battle of Blenheim,' which would have been a sad economy, nor yet 'in any of the desperate attacks on Lille,' Dick continued for many years to be an increasing source of expenditure and pride to his Yorkshire home. The elder, Jack, had chosen diplomacy, a no less costly method of serving the State. In 1710 the father writes: 'I verily believe these two sons of ours have spent between them £10,000 within the last seven or eight years'; they and the daughters 'are all money-bound. It is well they have a good father's house to tarry in.' Five years later Dick's zeal for his regiment caused him to 'lay out £600 above what was allowed him, so well he loves the service.'

Smaller squires paid equally little for their sons' schooling, and then prenticed them to cheaper trades than the army or diplomatic service. In the plays of Congreve and Farquhar the younger son of the manor may still expect to be 'bound prentice,' perhaps 'to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury'; and Steele declares that 'younger brothers are generally condemned to shops, colleges and inns of court.'¹ On these terms the gentry could afford to have large families, and although a great proportion of their children died young, they kept England supplied with a constant stream of high-spirited young men, who led her along the forward path at home and overseas. For the 'younger sons' were willing, as the cadets of the continental nobility were not, to mingle in the common avocations of mankind and not to 'stand upon their gentry.' The fact that the younger son went out to make his fortune in the army or at the bar, in industry or in commerce, was one of the general causes favouring the Whigs and their

¹ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1732, we read 'I remember (and am now near seventy-three) the younger sons of our best families were usually bound apprentices to eminent merchants. But now young master must be sent into the army as soon as he can strut tolerably well.' (*Gentleman's Magazine*, No. XXII, Vol. II, p. 1015.) See *Way of the World*, III, 15; *Trip to the Jubilee*, I, 1; *Tender Husband*, I, 1.

alliance with those interests, as against the desire of the High Tories to keep the landed gentry an exclusive as well as a dominant class. Dominant it remained for another century, but only on condition of opening its doors wide to newcomers, and fostering in a hundred different ways close alliance with interests other than agriculture, in scenes far remote from the manor house and the village church. The country gentlemen ruled Eighteenth-Century England, but they ruled it largely in the interest of commerce and empire.

It is indeed one of the curiosities of English life from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century that, although the landed gentry looked down on the mercantile class as a lower order of society, many of the landed families had not only acquired their estates by money made in trade, but continued from generation to generation to invest in mercantile and financial adventures of every kind. The House of Russell, one of the main pillars of the Whig landed aristocracy, had risen and thriven not more by acquisition of monastic acres than by judicious investment in trading concerns throughout the Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart periods. In the reigns of William and Anne, Sir William Blackett, the leading merchant and mineowner on Tyneside, sometimes member for

Newcastle in the Whig interest, became also a landed proprietor in the heart of rural Northumberland, where he had bought the estate of the needy Jacobite, Sir John Fenwick. The Blacketts of the next generation became Tories under the influence of 'Osbaldistone' rural society, but they remained mercantile as well as landed magnates, and put into agricultural improvement much of the wealth they acquired on Tyneside. These cases are typical of countless other instances. The close personal connection between the landed and trading interests gave stability and unity to the social fabric in England, which was lacking to the *ancien régime* in France, with its sharp distinction of interest between *noblesse* and *bourgeoisie*.

The common schooling of the upper and middle class was criticized, even in those days, for its too rigidly classical curriculum. It was even declared by some that 'a girl which is educated at home with her mother is wiser at twelve than a boy at sixteen' who knows only Latin. Yet the second classical language was so ill taught at school and college that the excellent Latinists of Christ Church had not enough Greek to be aware that Bentley had proved them dunces

over the *Letters of Phalaris*. It was only in the Nineteenth Century that the typical English scholar was equally at home with Aristophanes and with Horace.

It would be a mistake to suppose that nothing was anywhere taught but classics ; there was considerable variety in the type of school patronized by gentlemen. Thus Robert Pitt, father of a mighty son, writes in 1704 to his own scarcely less formidable father, Governor Pitt of Madras :

My two brothers are at Mr. Meure's Academy, near Soho Square, esteemed the best in England. They learn Latin, French and accounts, fencing, dancing and drawing. I think of settling them in Holland for their better education next summer : and should my wife's father-in-law, Lt. Gen. Stewart, accompany the Duke of Marlborough, of placing them under his care to see a campaign.

Among the critics of our educational methods were the wise Locke and the good-natured Steele, who both urged that perpetual flogging was not the best method of imparting knowledge and maintaining discipline. Upper-class education was admitted on all hands to need reform, yet nothing was done to reform it. Swift, for all his hatred of the Scots, agreed for once with Burnet that the lairds gave their sons more sound book-learning than the wealthier and idler English.

Nevertheless, the Eighteenth Century, in spite of its educational defects, produced a larger proportion of remarkable and original men from among those who passed through its schools than our highly educated and over-regulated age is able to do. And in spite of cruel flogging by 'those licensed tyrants the schoolmasters,' and cruel bullying by the unlicensed tyranny of ill-disciplined schoolfellows, there was also much happiness in boyhood, that still had leisure and still spent it in the free range of the countryside. Nor was severity universal : a young lord, newly arrived at Eton, writes home : 'I think Eaton very easy scholl. I am shure one cannot offend without they be meare rakes indeed.'

Women's education was sadly to seek. Among the lower classes it was perhaps not much worse than men's, but the daughters of the well-to-do had admittedly less education than their brothers. It was before the days of 'ladies' academies,' and though there were 'boarding schools' for girls, they were few and indifferent. Most ladies learnt from their mothers to read, write, sew and manage the household. We hear of no fair Grecians, like Lady Jane Grey and Queen Elizabeth in days of old. But a few ladies could

read the Italian poets and were therefore held in some awe by their swains. And at least two women could meet Swift on terms of something like intellectual equality. Yet it was he who lamented 'that not one gentleman's daughter in a thousand should be brought to read her own natural tongue, or be judge of the easiest books that are written in it.' The want of education in the sex was discussed as an admitted fact, one side defending it as necessary in order to keep wives in due subjection, while the other side, led by the chief literary men of the day, ascribed the frivolity and the gambling habits of ladies of fashion to an upbringing which debarred them from more serious interests.

Nevertheless, country-house letters of the period show us wives and daughters writing as intelligent advisers of their menfolk. Such correspondents were something better than brainless playthings or household drudges. A whole class of the literature of the day, from the *Spectator* downwards, was written as much for ladies as for their fathers and brothers. And it was observed that the ladies took a part, often too eager, in the Whig and Tory feuds that divided town and country. As to rural pastimes, the prototype of Diana Vernon is to be found in

Farquhar's Belinda, who tells her friend 'I can gallop all the morning after the hunting horn and all the evening after a fiddle. In short I can do everything with my father but drink and shoot flying.'

In the upper and middle classes, husbands were found for girls on the principle of frank barter. 'As to Cloky,' writes her father, squire Molesworth, 'we shall not have money enough to dispose of her here,' so she must be sent to Ireland to seek there a husband at a cheaper rate. Another squire, named Guise, who is in search of a wife for himself, writes, 'Lady Diana sent a very venerable person to view my estates, and was well satisfied with the report and I think did sincerely desire I might have her daughter.' But the daughter had other views, so Guise found consolation elsewhere :

Being on the Bench at the quarter Session, a Justice of the Peace took me aside and asked me *whether I would marry a woman worth twenty-thousand pounds.* The lady I had seen but never spoke to, and upon the whole readily accepted his offer.

A Cornet of Horse writes with equal frankness :

Not expecting anything this campaign I had taken thoughts another way, to try my fortune under Venus,

and accordingly about a fortnight ago was (by some friends) proposed to a lady of very good fortune : but how I shall speed (farther than a favourable interview already) I can't tell.

Since almost everyone regarded it as a grave misfortune to remain single, women did not account it a universal grievance that their hands should often be disposed of by others. They were no doubt usually consulted as to their destiny, much or little according to character and circumstance. Swift, in writing 'to a very young lady on her marriage,' speaks of 'the person your father and mother have chosen for your husband,' and almost immediately adds, 'yours was a match of prudence and common good liking, without any mixture of the ridiculous passion' of romantic love. And this description would probably have covered a vast proportion of the 'arranged' marriages of the day. But since the 'ridiculous passion' sometimes asserted itself, runaway matches were common enough, like that of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Divorce was almost unknown. It was obtainable only through Church Courts, and then only if followed by a special Act of Parliament ; not more than six divorces were thus legalized during the twelve years of Queen Anne.

Both sexes gambled freely, the fine ladies and gentlemen even more than the country squires. In London, Bath and Tunbridge Wells the gaming-table was the central point of interest, while in the manor house it was of less account than the stables and the kennel. The expenses of gambling and of sport, as well as a noble zeal for building and for laying out gardens and planting avenues, burdened estates with mortgages which proved a heavy clog on agricultural improvement and domestic happiness. Immense sums of money changed hands over cards and dice. As the pious Robert Nelson wrote to his young cousin, 'gaming hath brought footmen into coaches, and has made them walk on foot that before kept them.' Since politics were no less the rage than gambling, there were packs of political playing cards, Whig, Tory and patriotic—'Orange cards containing the happy Revolution in pictures,' Sacheverell cards, and 'Queen Anne cards,' recalling the military and naval glories of her reign. The Dissenters maintained a Puritan disapproval of gambling and even of card-playing as such. In 1711 the Assembly of the General Baptists passed a resolution :

That playing at cards and earnestly contending for the same in Christian families is unbecoming and

unlawful for such as profess the Gospel of Christ and unfits them for Church Communion.

Drunkenness was the acknowledged national vice of Englishmen of all classes, though women were seldom accused of it. A movement for total abstinence was out of the question in days before tea or coffee could be obtained in every home. But tracts in favour of temperate drinking were freely circulated by religious bodies and anxious patriots, setting forth with attractive detail the various and dreadful fates of drunkards, some killed attempting to ride home, others seized by a fit while blaspheming, all gone straight to Hell. Among the common folk, ale still reigned supreme ; but ale had a new rival worse than itself in the deadly attraction of bad spirits. The acme of cheap spirit-drinking was not indeed reached till the reign of George II, in the days of Hogarth's 'gin-lane,' but things were already moving in that direction.

Meanwhile the upper class got drunk sometimes on ale and sometimes on wine. It is hard to say whether the men of fashion or the rural gentry were the worst soakers. But perhaps the outdoor exercise taken by the fox-hunting, sporting and farming squire made him better able to absorb his nightly quantum of October, than

the gamester and politician of St. James's Square to escape the ill effects of endless Whig toasts in port and Tory toasts in French claret and champagne. Magistrates often appeared on the bench heated with wine. The leading physician in the capital, Dr. Radcliffe, whose highly rewarded skill and generous disposition stand commemorated in one of the noblest buildings of his old University, was once sent for at an unseasonable moment to attend the Princess Anne. He blurted out over the bottle that 'Her Highness's distemper was nothing but the vapours.' This piece of truthfulness in wine, being reported at Court, had, his biographer tells us, the effect of permanently consigning the future queen and her family to other and less skilful hands—possibly with important consequences to the history of England.

Tobacco was still taken in long churchwarden pipes. A 'smoking parlour' was set aside in some country houses. But Beau Nash forbade smoking in the public rooms at Bath, as disrespectful and unpleasant to ladies. Among the common people of the south-western counties, men, women and even children smoked pipes of an evening. When in 1707 the Bill for the Security of the Church of England was passing

through Parliament, Dr. Bull, the High Church Bishop of St. David's, being suspicious of the Whig proclivities of some of the Bench, kept watch 'sitting in the lobby of the House of Lords, all the while smoking his pipe.' Swift describes how his brother parsons pull his character to pieces at their favourite resort at Truby's coffee house,

And pausing o'er a pipe, with doubtful nod
Give hints that poets ne'er believe in God.

The taking of snuff became general in England during the first year of Anne's reign, as a result of the immense quantities thrown on to the London market after the capture of Spanish ships loaded with snuff in the action of Vigo Bay.

The drinking and gambling habits of society, and the fierceness of political faction, led to frequent duels of which many ended ill. The survivor, if he could show there had been fair play, was usually convicted of manslaughter and imprisoned for a short term ; or haply 'pleaded his clergy,' was 'touched with cold iron' and so set free. It was the privilege of all gentlemen, from a Duke downwards, to wear swords and to murder one another by rule. As soon as men were well drunk of an evening they were apt to

quarrel, and as soon as they quarrelled they were apt to draw their swords in the room, and, if manslaughter was not committed on the spot, to adjourn to the garden behind the house, and fight it out that night with hot blood and unsteady hand. If the company were not wearing swords, the quarrel might be slept upon and forgotten in the sober morning. Fortunately the wearing of swords, though usual in London, was not common in the depth of the country, among the uncourtly but good-natured rural squires, whose bark was often worse than their bite. And even at Bath, Beau Nash employed his despotic power to compel the fashionable world to lay aside their swords when they entered his domain: in this he did as good service to the community as in teaching the country bumpkins to discard their top boots and coarse language at the evening assemblies and dances. During his long supremacy as Master of the Ceremonies, nearly covering the reigns of Anne and the first two Georges, Nash did perhaps as much as any other person even in the Eighteenth Century to civilize the neglected manners of mankind.

London and the county capitals were the commonest scenes of such duels as Thackeray has immortalized in *Esmond*. Even more often

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70 BOWLS, CRICKET, COCKFIGHTS

Ever since the Restoration, foreigners had admired the English bowling greens 'which are so even, that they bowl upon them as easily as on a great billiard table. And as this is the usual diversion of gentlemen in the country, they have thick rowling-stones to keep the green smooth.' In Anne's reign cricket was just beginning to take its place among village sports alongside of the far more ancient football. Kent was the county most renowned at the new game, and, 'among the Kentish men, the men of Dartford lay claim to the greatest excellence.'

At cockfighting all classes yelled their bets round the little amphitheatre. If a foreigner should by chance come into these cockpits, we are told, 'he would certainly conclude the assembly to be all mad, by their continued outcries of Six to Four, Five to One, repeated with great earnestness, every Spectator taking part with his favourite cock, as if it were a party cause.' Horse-racing presented much the same spectacle in a more open arena. Race meetings were attended by spectators who were most of them on horseback. They were still regional or county gatherings. The only national meeting was at Newmarket. There indeed 'the vast company of horsemen on the plain at a match

contains all mankind on equal footing from the Duke to the country peasant. Nobody wears swords, but are clothed suitable to the humour and design of the place for horse sports. Everybody strives to out-jockey (as the phrase is) one another.' The Queen, out of the secret service money, gave plates to be run for at Newmarket, and at Datchet near Windsor. Arab and Barb blood was being introduced by Godolphin and other noble patrons of the sport—a change fraught with great future consequence to the character and appearance of horse-flesh in England.

Sword-fighting was a coarse popular spectacle, not far removed from the gladiatorial shows of old Rome, save that the wounds inflicted on the platform at an English fair, though disabling, were not intended to be fatal. Hardly more alluring to our modern sensibilities is the notice issued in April 1702 'to all gentlemen, gamesters and others' of a fight between a 'bald-faced dog of Middlesex against a fallow dog of Cow Cross, being a general day of sport by all the old gamesters, and a great mad bull to be turned loose in the game-place with fireworks all over him and two or three cats tied to his tail and dogs after them.' Fighting of parties of men

with sticks or fists, and 'women fighting in their shifts' were also popular spectacles. Foreigners waiting for the boat at Harwich saw with amazement two sailors, who had been promised a crown by 'two lords,' strip to their waists and fight with fists till their faces ran with blood, and 'whenever they wanted to give over the spectators tossed them a shilling to keep them to it. This is a common pastime of passengers.' The famous diplomat, Richard Hill, accustomed to less exuberant street scenes abroad, described his countrymen as 'a drunken Gothic nation that loves noise and bloody noses.'

There was a good side to pugilism. The English common folk, below the rank of gentlemen-duellists who must return a stab for a blow, thought shame to revenge their injuries by murder. The quarrels of the common people were settled in England by the fist, not the knife. A story was current of an English sailor in a Chinese port, who, when rudely shoved out of the way at a Mandarin's train in the street, challenged the Mandarin and his officials to box; the story ends with 'Jack' winning the amused favour of the Mandarin himself by knocking down his champion, a giant Tartar, in fair fight. Such already was the Englishman's idea of himself,

and in particular of Jack ashore in foreign parts.

When we try to imagine how the generality of our ancestors disported themselves out-of-doors, we must remember that most of them lived widely scattered and in the country. For most men the village was the largest unit of their intercourse. A village cricket match, or hurly-burly at football, or races on the green were very different from the 'organized athletics' of the modern arena. But most people took their 'exercise' as a matter of course in doing their work, in tilling the soil, or in walking or riding to and from their daily task. Among the upper and middle class riding was the commonest act of the day.

The most usual 'sports' that lay at many men's doors, were taking fish, and shooting and snaring birds of all kinds, particularly but not exclusively 'game.'¹ England was alive with game and with many birds now rare or extinct, from the Great Bustard of the Downs and the eagle of Westmorland and Wales down to many smaller friends that survived to be recorded by Bewick. Much of the land was strictly preserved

¹ See p. 41, above.

CHAPTER III

IN the Middle Ages, the economic and social position of the village clergy had been identified with that of the peasants. Parish priests took an active part in Wat Tyler's rising against the proprietary classes, the wealthy monasteries and the great princes of the Church. The Reformation not only permitted the clergy to marry, and removed from them a great weight of unpopularity by abolishing invidious clerical privileges and powers, but also gradually raised the social status of the parson. Before the end of the reign of George III, Jane Austen depicted a society in which the rural clergy are scarcely to be distinguished from squires in education, in standing and in desirability as husbands for young ladies—although even at that time there was a class of poor parson of whom we hear nothing in those novels of sheltered life.

In Anne's reign the village clergy stood midway between the low social position they had occupied in the Middle Ages and the high social

56 SOCIAL POSITION OF THE CLERGY

position to which they attained under the House of Hanover. Just because their status was on the up-grade, it was equivocal and a subject of frequent dispute.

As to his Priesthood [says one writer of the period], I see nothing in that which can intitle him to more than the quality of an ordinary Gentleman, for that, as I take it, the common courtesy of England allows him, as well as an Attorney or Licenciat in Physick. And being only a Gentleman by Profession, he is inferior to him who is a Gentleman by Birth.¹

There were indeed many sons of squires in the priesthood. But most of the village clergy were themselves children of the parsonage, or else of the farmhouse. Ycomen with large families often sent one son to the local school to pick up Latin, and thence passed him through the University on the basis of semi-starvation. At Oxford the 'Servitours' of this class sometimes slept four in a garret, pinched by poverty, and earning their keep by waiting on 'Gentlemen Commoners.' A Servitour's fortune was described in 1704 as consisting of 'the reversion of old shoes which Gentlemen Commoners leave

¹ From a curious tract of 1700 entitled *Mrs. Abigail, or an account of a female skirmish between the wife of a country squire and the wife of a Doctor in Divinity*. It throws light on the question of the social position of the parsons and their wives.

off, two rags called shirts, a dog's-eared grammar and a piece of an *Ovid de Tristibus*.' Such was the rough educational ladder of old times, up which many remarkable men have climbed. The principle of equality among students, which became axiomatic in the Universities of the Nineteenth Century, was then impossible, for it must have excluded either the rich or the poor from Oxford and Cambridge.¹

In an age when class distinctions were so universally accepted that not even philosophers called them in question, the position of such poverty-stricken aspirants to social advancement

¹ A brutal Hudibrastic poem of 1709, 'The Servitour,' describes the 'husbandman's' son passing through the University on the way to a parsonage :

'For he conceived a mighty notion
Of th'honour t'which he should attain
By living among gentlemen ;
Who ne'er before did any know
Except his landlord 'twas or so.
He struts, pulls off his cap to no man,
And to conceal, betrays the ploughman.
But checked for's insolent behaviour
And fearing to be out of favour,
His duty h'as so much regard of,
He'll cap a master twenty yards off.'

See also C. E. Mallet, *History of Oxford*, III, pp. 66-67. Swift, in the *Education of Ladies*, writes, 'The sons of clergymen bred to learning with any success must, by reason of their parents' poverty be very inconsiderable, many of them being only admitted servitors in colleges, and consequently proving good for nothing.'

was equivocal, and left them an easy mark for the ill-natured satire which played so large a part in the politics and literature of the day. To make matters worse, the clerical profession was at that time over-stocked by rival candidates. Sycophancy towards patrons who had livings or private chaplaincies in their gift was only too common in the hungry host, jostling for their shares of an inadequate supply of loaves and fishes. Even the proud-souled Swift, though assuredly no sycophant, was notoriously pre-occupied about his own promotion.

These characteristics of the clerical life of the day were commented upon alike by the friends and the critics of the Church. Addison, who was both at once, held up to censure the conduct of patrons who dismissed their chaplains from table before dessert, and forbade them to touch the jelly. But he represents Sir Roger de Coverley as bound by ties of equal friendship to the parson whom he has appointed to his parish, who 'understood a little backgammon,' and 'was a good scholar tho' he does not show it.'

The private chaplain had, indeed, to suffer whatever indignities were put upon him, if he happened to fall in with inconsiderate employers.

But the parson of a parish, once inducted, was a freeholder, and could with impunity defy both bishop and squire, unless he set out on the arduous pursuit of pluralities or of a better living in exchange. Such designs were pardonable when penury was at the door. Gregory King had estimated the average income of 10,000 clergy at £48 in the year of the Revolution; and a return of the resources of the beneficed clergy of Lincolnshire in the reign of Anne does not lead one to suppose that much improvement had then taken place. Many even of the Rectories were valued at something between £30 and £60 a year. Some livings were not worth £10 a year, and many were so inconsiderable that no one could reside. Plurality, if sometimes an abuse, was more often a necessity, limited by the canonical rule that no one should hold two livings with cure of souls if they were more than thirty miles apart.

Many parishes were tended only by curates. In the diocese of Worcester a curate's salary was £24 a year, while the Bishop had fifty times as much. Some livings, indeed, were worth £200, like Epworth, the benefice of Samuel Wesley, the remarkable father of yet more famous sons; and even Samuel Wesley was constantly in debt.

In 1703 the Chancellor of Norwich Diocese writes :

We have but one clergyman laid violent hands upon himself since I came here [two years before], but abundance have broke. Two who made a great show went off together out of this neighbourhood last week.

Although the incomes enjoyed by the clergy represented a much greater purchasing power than the same money to-day, they were very small, especially when we remember that the parsonage so often contained a crowded nursery and school-room. Bishops' postbags were full of such letters as this—'I have six children all at my own charges, my wife is downlying, I owe £16 and know not how to pay 'em.' The *Dictionary of National Biography* bears witness to many prominent men who were sons of the parsonage, answering to the 'children of the manse' in Scotland. The duty of begetting and attempting to rear children left little over on which the parson himself could achieve a high and liberal culture in a remote village.

It was to remedy this state of things that Queen Anne instituted her famous Bounty. The 'first-fruits and tenths' of benefices, originally exacted by the Pope, had, after the Reformation,

been annexed by the Crown. Nominally, the incoming clergyman had to pay his whole first year's income and the tenth of every year's income ; but, in fact, the ' first-fruits and tenths,' like so many old English taxes, had become a fixed charge of a much less onerous character, estimated at about £16,000 a year for the whole country. The fund thus derived from the taxation of benefices had been used as a source of privy income by the Crown, not always in the most respectable manner. When Anne came to the throne, a thousand a year was being paid to a nobleman who had bought the interest in the fund enjoyed by Charles II's French mistress, the *Duchess of Portsmouth*. And a thousand a year was being paid to Nell Gwynne's royal offspring, the Duke of St. Albans, who had become a Whig and a soldier of William. Burnet, the historian of the Reformation, whose researches had familiarized him with the history of the fund, first raised the question of its proper use. As Whig Bishop of Salisbury, the burly protagonist of Low Church offered a broad target for the abuse and ridicule of his clerical brethren. He repaid them in a manner worthy of a Christian, not only by constantly befriending the poorer clergy of his diocese with zeal exemplary in a bishop, but by

urging upon his patron King William that the first-fruits and tenths ought to go to the relief of poor benefices. William's financial straits prevented him from acceding to Burnet's request, though he considered it favourably and though it was supported by Somers. But a few years later Queen Anne was persuaded to act a part worthy of her special love of the Church, at the instance partly of Burnet, partly of her ecclesiastical adviser, Sharp, the wise Archbishop of York, whose motto was 'no politics.'

Accordingly, in February 1704, the announcement of Queen Anne's Bounty was made, and an Act of Parliament was passed that year to give it effect. She not only remitted all arrears of first-fruits and tenths to poor clergymen in debt to government on that head, but she made over the fund itself for the increase of inadequate stipends. Owing to bad debts and the existing charges on the fund, little could be paid to the clergy before she died. But by the early part of George II's reign the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty were in a position to make frequent grants, which were invested to increase the value of poor benefices.

It was also in the reign of Anne that a design was set on foot to circulate books among those

provincial clergy who could not otherwise afford to study. The intention was *excellent*, and High and Low Churchmen worked side by side in this as in other similar movements of that factious but philanthropic age. Unfortunately the effort was *made on too small a scale*. In 1711 about forty-five towns in England were each receiving from this source a 'library' of some forty religious books, representing the two prevailing schools of thought in the Church. But the library movement hardly touched the fringe of the rural parishes. In those days the bulky tomes in which learning was *buried could not be had cheap*, and it is not therefore surprising that the impoverished clergy were less accustomed to read Plato and the Fathers with their feet on the fender than their successors in the golden age of Queen Victoria.

Swift's picture of the 'Country Parson,' wherein the author's natural acidity is tempered by his love of the Church of England, may stand for the portrait of the parish clergyman, if a single picture must serve :

Parson, these things in thy possessing
 Are better than the bishop's blessing.
 A wife that makes conserves ; a steed
 That carries double when there's need ;

October store and best Virginia,
 Tythe-pig and mortuary guinea ;
Gazettes sent *gratis* down and franked,
 For which the patron's weekly thanked ;
 A large concordance bound long since ;
 Sermons to Charles the First, when Prince ;
 A chronicle of ancient standing ;
 A *Chrysostom* to smooth thy band in.

* * * * * *

He that has these, may pass his life,
 Drink with the squire, and kiss his wife ;
 On Sundays preach, and eat his fill ;
 And fast on Fridays—if he will ;
 Toast Church and Queen, explain the news,
 Talk with churchwardens about pews ;
 Pray heartily for some new gift,
 And shake his head at doctor Swift.

Most of Swift's clerical brethren 'shook their heads' at him over the bold imagery of his *Tale of a Tub*, and not at all in reproof of the ferocity of his onslaughts against Papists, Whigs and Dissenters, in which he hardly surpassed the warmth of the majority of the Lower House of Convocation.

Zeal for the cause of the Church of England was then inflamed by two negative passions, anti-Popery and anti-Puritanism. Each was based on bitter experience of the past and consequent fear for the future. The fires of Smithfield were the most living part of English historical tradition,

popularized in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, the only book besides the Bible which was equally welcome in the home of the High Churchman and the Dissenter. And these feelings had been revived and strengthened by the recent action of James II in overthrowing the laws of the land in order to re-establish a Roman Catholic despotism in England, and by the renewal of an unprovoked, cruel and wholesale persecution of the Huguenots in France after they had for long years been good and loyal subjects. England was full of the French victims of contemporary Roman Catholic intolerance, and their case was not therefore likely to be forgotten. The supremacy of Louis XIV in Europe, which seemed almost established when Anne ascended the throne, would probably lead to the restoration in England of the Roman Catholic Pretender, whose cause the Grand Monarch had just espoused, standing by the death-bed of James II. In these circumstances, the Church of England, even the distinctively High Church section of it, showed no relenting towards Rome.

But if the events of that generation had renewed the fear of Rome, the events of fifty years back were responsible for an answering fear of Puritanism. The overthrow of the Church

and the aristocracy, the beheading of the King, and the rigid rule of the Saints had left a negative impression almost as formidable and permanent as the memory of 'bloody Mary' and James II. The Cavalier and Anglican view of the Great Civil War held the field, even after the Revolution; the Whigs scoffed at it in private but only occasionally dared to contradict it in public. Animosity against the quiet business men who attended Nonconformist chapels was fostered on the ground that they were one and all 'fanatics,' about to draw the sword and again destroy the Church; such fears scarcely derived from close observation of contemporary facts, but were the result of historical memories, constantly kept alive in the parish pulpit, in Tory pamphlets, and in the talk of men. The Dissenters might seem humble and harmless burghers, but they were in alliance with the powerful and dangerous Whig lords, and unless they were kept low *'forty-one would come again'*. Such was the belief. And the memory of Cromwell was scarcely more productive of bitter fears for the future than was the actual presence beyond the Cheviots of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, established and intolerant.

The Low Churchmen, on the other hand,

regarded the danger to the Church of England from Rome and France as real, and the danger from Dissent and Scotland as imaginary. The Bishops appointed by William since the Revolution, and the majority of the highly educated clergy of the capital, were Low Churchmen. When, therefore, Anne ascended the throne, the Upper House of Convocation was Low Church and the Lower House was High Church, and there was little love lost between them. Addison's Tory Fox-hunter remarks, 'There is scarce a Presbyterian in the whole county except the Bishop.' And the Whigs replied by taunting the High Church clergy with being themselves Presbyterians, since they were always defying the episcopal authority. The bitterness of invective in these controversies, as in most controversy in old times, is astonishing to modern students of long-forgotten pamphlets. Sacheverell, the leading High Church champion of the day, accuses the Low Churchmen as a body, including half the most highly respectable Bishops, of immoral lives and unmentionable vices, on no ground at all save his own party animus.¹ Such methods of

¹ *Character of the Low Churchman*, 1702, pp. 17-18. This amazing piece of Billingsgate is repeated in the second edition, 1706, p. 11.

different ways interfered. But when the High Churchman made clerical claims of his own over the laity, he at once aroused the same impatient temper as had destroyed successively the power of Rome, the power of Laud and the power of the Puritans. The history of England can never be understood unless we realize the presence of another force at work besides the rival religions, the unorganized but very real passion of anti-clericalism. This passion, at the service of the Church against Papist and Puritan, was at the service of the Whigs against the pretensions of the 'high-flying' clergy, when they clamoured for the suppression of unorthodox opinions and the reinforcement of Church discipline over the laity.

Antagonism to the Church no longer took the form of a militant Puritanism demanding 'a godly thorough Reformation,' as in the days of Pym and Cromwell; the Dissenters would have been only too thankful to be sure of the undisturbed enjoyment of the Toleration Act and of the schools they had founded to educate their own children, without again provoking persecution by another attempt to capture the Establishment. The anti-Church feeling that gave most vigour to the Whig party in the days of Somers and Wharton was of a different order from

Cromwell's. It was the nascent latitudinarianism of the new century, a feeling against 'priestcraft' in all its forms which already appeared in not a few pamphlets and in common talk. Two centuries of rival religious persecutions, Catholic and Protestant, Puritan and Anglican, ending in the anti-Roman revolution of 1688, had aroused in England a movement of resistance to clerical claims of all sorts, destined to pass in a more virulent form to the Continent, when the bankruptcy of Louis XIV's persecuting policy had become fully apparent over there. The day of Voltaire was yet to come, but in England under William and Anne the attitude of open disrespect for the clergy already alarmed the High Church party, especially in connection with the 'Socinian' and 'Deistic' philosophy of the 'Freethinkers.'¹ The cry was raised for fresh laws to keep Dissenters in due subordination, and for State action against impiety and abuse of the clergy. Clerical writers complained that the word 'parson' was used in many companies as a word of contempt, and that young lawyers called them 'black locusts.' Bishop Trelawny wrote

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in 1703 that 'in Westminster Hall, Atheism, Socinianism and perfect detestation of the principles and government of the Universities is allowed and justified.'

Yet it may be questioned whether the Universities were not themselves at the bottom of the trouble. Collins, Toland and the professed deists made the noise, but did not carry the weight; more profoundly and ultimately influential was the system of exact reasoning conducted by such giants as Barrow, Newton, Locke and Bentley, and the work of the Royal Society, in place of the mere learning and oratory of the academic world before the Restoration. These greater men sometimes descended into the field against the 'Deists,' but they were themselves laying the foundations of the larger reasonableness and latitudinarianism of the Eighteenth Century.

The avowedly anti-clerical writers, while showering abuse on 'priestcraft,' were careful to confine their philosophic arguments within bounds. They eschewed the 'atheism' of which they were accused, but claimed that reason must be the arbiter of all doctrines; and while they tended by implication to efface the supernatural, they retained the divine element in religion. There was nothing of Bradlaugh in Toland,

Collins and young Lord Shaftesbury under Anne, or in Bolingbroke and Pope in the following reigns. They suffered therefore nothing worse than a certain measure of social obloquy and a shower of enraged pamphlets, and even these penalties were only dealt out to those of them who were both Whigs and commoners.

For, in spite of the outcries of the Lower House of Convocation, times were not propitious in England for persecution. The Church was rent by her own political divisions, and her official representatives belonged to the party that favoured toleration. And most Englishmen, though they derived their political opinions chiefly from their dislike of other people's religions, were heartily tired of persecution in practice. The harsh enforcement of the Clarendon Code in the reign of Charles II had made life uncomfortable for everyone, and had admittedly been very bad for business. Moreover in 1702 a united front for the war against France was desired on patriotic grounds by many strong High Churchmen, like the famous Tory pamphleteer Davenant, and Queen Anne herself. The Whig aristocracy protected the free expression of opinion, whether Puritan or Deistic. The Puritans were only too glad to make common cause with the Rationalists,

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to render Toleration secure. Some of the Tory leaders, like St. John, the future Bolingbroke, were as pronounced freethinkers as Collins himself, and were moreover libertines desirous of anything rather than the revival of the authority of the Church Courts over morals. The poems of Ned Ward, the popular Tory poet, though full of hearty abuse of Papists and Dissenters, are also full of ribaldry, libertinage and something very like scoffing at religion. The High Church clergy, who for a short while believed that the accession of Anne meant a return to the age of Laud, raised a cry for the revival of a compulsory penance and the '*primitive discipline of the Church*,' but such pretensions, though actively enforced by the clerical democracy of Scotland, were in England a long-lost cause.¹

¹ E.g. *The Church of England's Wish for the Restoring of Primitive Discipline*, 1703.

It is remarkable that in 1705 the Chancellor of Worcester Diocese pronounced sentence in the Bishop's Court on a Baronet for incontinency, condemning him to appear in a white sheet in the cathedral during service on a stated day. Whether the sentence was carried out does not appear. *Diary Francis Evans*, p. xvii. Such discipline, common in Scotland, was very rare in England in Anne's reign. In answer to the Bishop's question, 'Have any public penances been performed since my last visitation?' almost every parson in Bucks replied, 'None,' except in a case which was to defend a woman's character from slander, not to punish immorality. In Lincolnshire there were some half-dozen penances done for the whole county. But in

The Press, too, had entirely escaped from ecclesiastical control. The censorship had never been renewed since its lapse in 1695; anyone therefore could print what he liked, subject to such proceedings as might afterwards be taken against him in Parliament or in a court of law for sedition, libel or blasphemy. The Toleration Act, though strictly limited in scope by its text, had in practice been extended to persons outside its actual provisions, like Unitarians and Papists, and had created an atmosphere antipathetic to the persecution even of highly unpopular opinion. England had moved far since the days of Elizabeth, when Unitarians had been burnt at the stake.

some rural districts the authority of the Church Courts over sin died rather more slowly. In country parishes of Oxfordshire the Churchwardens still occasionally fulfilled their increasingly unpopular duty of 'presenting' neighbours for incontinence or the 'fame' of it, before the Church Courts. Public penance was in such case generally ordered, but seldom enforced; it was occasionally commuted for money, more often neglected. Occasionally persons were excommunicated for this, or for refusing to pay Church rates or other dues. But excommunication in Anne's reign meant nothing more than exclusion from the rites of the Church which the sinner probably and the Dissenter certainly had no wish in the world to attend. In the Isle of Man penance was done in Church in a white sheet as late as the reign of William IV (see A. G. Bradley, *Our Centenarian Grandfather*, pp. 162-163). *Wake MSS.*, Misc. 5 and 11, Epist. 5; *Lambeth MSS.* 1115; S. A. Peyton's *Oxfordshire Peculiars* (1928, Oxf. Record Soc.), pp. lxx-lxxv and *passim*.

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96 POSITION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Roman Catholic body benefited by this change of atmosphere. During a war with France on behalf of the Protestant Succession, English Roman Catholics, who could scarcely fail to be Jacobites at heart, might have been expected to suffer something analogous to the cruelties inflicted on the French Huguenots. But nothing of the sort occurred. Roman services, so long as they were conducted with some degree of privacy, were not interfered with at all. At St. Winifred's shrine there was a continual come and go of pilgrims, catered for by a whole regiment of priests in thin disguise, which the Protestants of the neighbourhood understood and respected. In every county in England, Roman Catholic nobles or gentlemen kept priests whose presence was neither obtruded on public notice nor enquired into by the authorities. They ministered to small congregations centring round the manor house. The Whig Duke of Devonshire, who had suffered under James II and was 'a steady opposer of Popery and the French power,' lived on excellent terms with the Roman Catholic gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Chatsworth, 'and remembered his Master King William saying that he came over to defend the Protestants and not to persecute the Papists.'

In the Eighteenth Century, Roman Catholicism was an aristocratic but unfashionable faith. It declined because it dared make no public propaganda in face of the laws and in face of a hostile public opinion. It was weakest in the towns, except in so far as the immigration of Irish poor into certain slum districts was beginning. The Roman Catholics were strong only in Lancashire, and there alone were they accused of making open propaganda. They made a certain show also among the landowners in Northumberland, Durham, Yorkshire and the English counties of the Welsh border. In Wales itself they were negligible. And in the typical midland and southern shires they were few and far between. Enquiries frequently made throughout the reign were answered in parish after parish by the parson's assurance that there was 'No Papist,' and occasionally by the addendum 'Nor, God be thanked, no Dissenter.'

To judge of the treatment of Roman Catholics merely by reading the Statute Book would lead to error. For in England the only part of the harsh laws against them which was actually enforced was the laws excluding them, as the Protestant Dissenters also were excluded, from civil office, and a further law which subjected

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Roman Catholics to pay double land tax. 'Only these two laws are put in practice,' wrote Cardinal Paolucci's secret agent in the year 1710. 'As regards the exercise of their religion they enjoy it entirely free.' Such was the Roman Catholic official account of the position in England under Anne. But the same agent made a very different report as to the treatment of his co-religionists in Ireland.¹

The Protestant Dissenters, other than the Unitarians, had obtained, under the provisions of the Toleration Act of 1689, the privilege of public worship in their own Meeting Houses. Except for occasional attacks by incendiary mobs in time of political excitement, this open public worship was everywhere enjoyed throughout the

¹ *P.R.O. Transcripts*, 9, *Rome*, 101. The report (which is in Italian) adds: 'There is no person of distinction who cannot if he so desires keep a chaplain, whether in town or in his country seat, without the government making any enquiry.' Like many foreign reports of the day, it calls the Tories 'Anglicani' and the Whigs 'Presbiteriani.' *H.M.C. Portland*, iv. pp. 86-87, gives typical instances of the non-enforcement of the laws purporting to prevent Papists from owning arms and good horses and travelling freely about England. Even at the crisis of the war (1704) they rode what they liked, where they liked, armed as they liked. But after the rising of the Catholic squires of Northumberland in 1715, priests and their congregations were persecuted for awhile in the Northern Counties, see *E.H.R.*, July 1929.

reign of Anne by the congregations of licensed Dissenting ministers. But unlicensed preachers were still liable, like Daniel Skingle at Hitchin, to be haled into the Spiritual Court and forced to desist and to ask pardon. Few country villages had a Meeting House, but few market towns were without one or more.

The three principal Nonconformist bodies were Baptist, Presbyterian and Quaker. It is uncertain which was the most numerous in the country as a whole. The Quakers had begun to decline in numbers and propagandist zeal, after the revivalist ardours of George Fox and his immediate disciples, which had swept over the common people of England in the days of Cromwell and of the second Charles. Toleration had not caused them to increase. But there were still, even in remote hamlets, many more Quakers than in later times. Denunciations of Quaker blasphemy and misbelief were still an important part of Church literature. In some towns the wealthy and educated Dissenters were beginning that drift towards Unitarianism which became a marked feature of English as distinct from Scottish Presbyterianism.

According to Davenant, Nonconformity in Anne's reign was strong among seafaring men,

among 'lower tradesmen and artificers, manufacturers and day labourers.' In some rural districts, like Bucks and Devon, the Dissenters were much stronger than in others. All over the country they were stronger in the market towns than in the villages, in the cities stronger still, and in London they were strongest of all. In 1711 a House of Commons Committee reported that English Dissenters and French Huguenots together made up a fifth of the half-million inhabitants of the London suburbs, exclusive of the City, and that they had built themselves 88 chapels; the remaining 400,000 potential Churchmen of the suburbs had only 28 parish churches among them.' At the end of William's reign a Lord Mayor of London had been so indiscreet as to attend his Nonconformist Meeting House with the official insignia of the City. This had aroused a storm of indignation and a cry of 'Church in Danger,' to which the accession of a Tory Queen gave fresh encouragement. The violence of the language commonly used in attacks on Dissenters is the violence common in the mouth of dominant parties; the replies of the Puritans were of a milder strain, very different from the intolerant tone of the days of their prosperity fifty years back.

In some districts, however, the relations of Churchmen and Dissenters were more kindly than the controversial literature of the time might lead one to suppose. In the Yorkshire dales, where Nonconformity was strong, there was much good feeling ; and in some parishes, even in the south, there were religious folk who attended both Church and Chapel.

In one respect the progress of science and scepticism had already won an important battle for humanity. The persecution of supposed witches had reached its height under the Puritan Commonwealth. It had since been declining, most rapidly among the educated class. The reign of Anne saw the real end of witch trials. Judges and country magistrates refused to convict old women of compacts with the Devil, on the evidence of their neighbours' prejudiced imaginings, or even of their own frantic confessions. This marked a great advance of common kindness and good sense over primæval cruelty and superstition. It was a victory of reason imposed by an educated aristocracy on a rural population that still retained its old belief in witches, but was in no position to assert it against the will of its 'betters.'

The decline in convictions for witchcraft was also one sign among many others that the scientific laws of evidence were better understood by bench and bar. Courts of Justice were beginning to weigh the value of testimony, and to trust less to the oath of informers and prejudiced or ignorant persons than in the days of Titus Oates and all previous ages, when every oath was an oath and weighed so much in the judicial balance.

In 1702 a rascal named Richard Hathaway was convicted at the Surrey Assizes for falsely accusing an old woman as a witch on the evidence of pins which he spat out of his mouth and declared that she had placed in his belly. In 1712 took place the last case of a conviction for witchcraft in England. In that famous case, the jury, indeed, found Jane Wenham guilty of witchcraft, but the judge, Sir John Powell, who had lightly remarked when she was accused of flying that there was no law against flying, respited her and she obtained a pardon. Her case attracted general attention and became the subject of a warfare of pamphlets. Some Church clergy took the field against the accused and attacked the judge, but the majority of the upper class could not feel sure that, because some sheep had died in fits, the farmers were necessarily right

in saying that Jane had bewitched them. Others pointed out that, even if several cats had been seen going about the village each with Jane Wenham's face, the Devil might have been malicious enough to manage the affair without her connivance. Some bold spirits avowed their disbelief in the possibility of any such phenomena, Scripture texts notwithstanding. These were the minority. But witch-trials in England were drawing to an end. In 1736 the law punishing witchcraft by death was repealed.

Similarly the upper class in this more sceptical generation were beginning to be annoyed when they were compelled, by the fears of their servants, to shut up half the rooms in an old manor house as 'haunted.' Stage comedies about sham ghosts indicated, not indeed entire materialism, but a new readiness to look supernatural stories in the mouth. The atmosphere of the capital was peculiarly inimical to old rustic romance.

I have known many a country lady come to London [says a character in Addison's *Drummer*], with frightful stories of the hall-house being haunted, of fairies, spirits and witches; that by the time she had seen a comedy, played at an Assembly, and ambled in a Ball or two, has been so little afraid of bugbears, that she has ventured home in a chair at all hours of the night.

But only a small proportion of the villagers of either sex ever visited town. Most people remained all their lives under the influence of Pan and his magic. The mental food of English children was just such cottage fireside tales of 'the hall-house being haunted, of fairies, spirits and witches,' perhaps only half believed but pleasantly shuddered at. Now that the witch could be pointed out but no longer hanged or ducked, such earth-born legendary lore was no unwholesome fare. The fairies still danced in the woods, though when the wayfarer came round the bush they had always vanished. Books in the village were few. The ordinary farmer and cottager saw no printed matter of any kind except Bible, Prayer Book and

The ballads pasted on the wall,
Of Joan of France and English Moll,
Fair Rosamund, and Robin Hood,
And the Little Children in the Wood.

And therefore, even at the end of the 'Century of reason' and of artificial poetry among the governing class, the faculty of wonder was not dead in the English people. Wordsworth attributed the growth of imagination in his own mind partly to the fairy-tales and ballads of the rustic North that he heard in childhood, in contrast

to the rationalism of the Nineteenth-Century schoolroom.

No city-made newspapers or magazines stamped a uniform mentality on the nation. At the beginning of Anne's reign villagers seldom saw a printed newspaper, but depended for their news on gossip or on the 'newsletters' written to the squire by his correspondents in town. Partly for this reason it was easy for gentry and clergy to mould the political opinions of the village.

In this isolation from the world at large, each shire, each hamlet had its own traditions, interests and character. Except for some unusual event like the Battle of Blenheim or the trial of Dr. Sacheverell, country folk had little to think or talk about except their own affairs. Their shrewd rustic comment on things they knew and understood was expressed in the pithy dialect of their own countryside. For gossip and sensation they were satisfied with the daily human drama of their own village, with its poaching affrays and smuggling adventures, its feuds and loves and suicides, its quarrels of miller and innkeeper, of parson and squire.

In his dislike of Papists, Dissenters and Deists, of Whig Bishops and Dutch allies, Swift was at

one with his high-flying brethren, and has become their mouthpiece for all time. But, as an Irish Protestant, he was not wholly typical of the English High Churchman. He was more of a Williamite, and continued to the end more whole-heartedly hostile to the *Pretender* than many of his English Tory allies ; it is not in the writings of Swift that we must seek the uneasy and hesitating attitude of the average High Churchman towards the questions of non-resistance, divine hereditary right, the Revolution and the Hanoverian Succession.

In defence of the Church of England against the direct assault of James II, the High Church laity had taken as leading a part in the Revolution of 1688 as any other section of the community.¹ In the following year, the Toleration Act had been granted with their full and free consent, in payment for the Dissenters' support of the Church against James. In 1701 the Tories in Parliament had taken the lead in passing the Act of Settle-

¹ According to Swift, the Revolution was 'wholly brought about by Church of England hands,' against the Dissenters (*Examiner*, No. 37). This is a partisan travesty of the facts, but it is no more untrue than the opposite assertion, that the Revolution was the work of the 'Whig aristocracy' against the Tories ! It is impossible to say whether Whigs or Tories, Churchmen or Dissenters were foremost in the rebellion that brought William of Orange from Torbay to London.

ment, fixing the reversion of the Crown after Anne's death on the House of Hanover, to the exclusion of James II's Catholic son. Nevertheless, many *High Churchmen still found it hard* to accept the consequences of their own successful act of rebellion. They feared the growth of Dissent under the Toleration Act. They could not stomach being called rebels and resisters of the Divine Right of Kings, for they had themselves made non-resistance and Divine Hereditary Right the shibboleth of good Churchmanship under Charles II. The inhuman doctrine that non-resistance was the subject's duty under every royal provocation had indeed broken down in practice, but it had not yet expired in theory. Because they were men, the Tories had resisted James ; because they were men, they afterwards tried to deny their own inconsistency, to explain away their own action and to avoid its logical results. In Anne's reign some Tory writers refused to admit that their beloved Queen reigned 'on a Revolution foot.' But they hardly knew what to say about her exiled brother, who would certainly be King if the Revolution had not happened. Many Tories continued to salve their consciences by regarding the Pretender's birth as doubtful, while the Whigs had no longer any

use for the warming-pan and rejoiced to think that an Act of Parliament could exclude a Prince otherwise legitimate. So anxious were the Tories to avoid the plain fact that they had been rebels in 1688, that they often argued that there had been no 'resistance' in the Revolution itself! ¹

The divided and uneasy attitude of many Churchmen towards the Revolution and towards the Dynastic question which the Revolution had created, was the source of fundamental weakness in the Tory party, otherwise the strongest in the State. These difficulties were greatly increased by the action of the Nonjurors, or consistently Jacobite clergy. Five out of the Seven Bishops *whom James had prosecuted in the famous trial*, refused to take the oaths to William, on the ground that Parliament could not change the divine right of hereditary succession. One of them, Lake of Chichester, declared on his death-bed that the 'religion of the Church of England taught me the doctrine of Non-resistance and Passive Obedience, which I took to be the distinguishing character of the Church of England.' The non-juring Bishops were followed in their refusal to

¹ *The Best Answer*, by a student at The temple, 1708, p. 8. In regard to the High Church and Tory attitude I refer the reader particularly to Mr. Keith Feiling's *History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714*.

take the oaths by about four hundred other clergy. They were all, in due course of law, extruded from their sees and benefices. The deprivation of Bishops by Act of Parliament they regarded as of no effect, and therefore formed themselves into a small rival Church of England, strong beyond its numbers in piety and learning, though hardly in common sense. They treated the great body of their clerical brethren as schismatics, and even had a form of absolution for admitting a 'penitent' from the false Church of England to their own more select communion.

The sees of the Nonjuror Bishops, including Canterbury vacated by Sancroft, were filled up in William's reign by Low Churchmen, or as we should now call them Broad Churchmen—the only unhesitating clerical supporters of the new regime. The appointment of men of this school of thought was a necessity to the State struggling for life against domestic and foreign foes, but it was naturally resented by the High Church party, which included the majority of the parish priests. The continuance of the Nonjuror Schism throughout the reign of Anne deprived the High Church clergy of the leadership of many of the ablest, most sincere and learned members of their party. As party-leader Sacheverell was a poor substitute

for Sancroft and Ken, especially as Sacheverell by his own showing ought to have been a Nonjuror. Meanwhile the Bench was crowded with able and learned Low Church Bishops like Tenison and Burnet, as the official fathers of the Church. A High Church party is more formidable when led by its Bishops, as in the days of the two Kings Charles, than when led against its Bishops, like Convocation in the reigns of William and Anne.

The immortal part of the Nonjurors' protest, which had far-reaching effects on Anglican thought at the time of the Oxford movement, was their insistence on the spiritual independence of the Church of England as a self-contained body, not a mere appanage of the State. The removal of the Nonjuring Bishops by the State for political reasons they regarded as a proof that the Church was in chains. But their claim for ecclesiastical independence was couched in a form which would have meant clerical domination in England. The Nonjurors did not claim the separation of the Church from the State, but the submission of the State to the Church : because the Church had once believed in the Divine Hereditary Right of Kings, England, they claimed, was for all time to be an absolute

monarchy, subject to a Roman Catholic Prince : even in politics the will of the people of England was to be overruled by the clergy. The Nonjurors claimed self-government for the Church, meaning the clergy alone ; for the laity had at that date no voice in the government of the Church of England, except in so far as they were represented by the supremacy of the Crown in Parliament : therefore an established Church uncontrolled by the State would have meant an uncontrolled clergy, dictating to the laity alike on matters spiritual and political.

The deprived Jacobite clergy stood on the flank of the body which they had left, stirring the uneasy consciences of the beneficed High Churchmen. The latter had no wish to be mere time-servers like the Vicar of Bray. But they heard themselves called so by indignant Nonjurors on one side and by the irreverent multitude on the other. The death of James II, followed shortly by the accession of his Anglican daughter Anne in place of William, eased the situation a little for the High Church conscience, and even brought back a few Nonjurors to the national fold. But, partly owing to the stricter terms of a new oath abjuring the Pretender, the relief was but partial. The end of the Queen's reign was to see the

Church of England and therewith the Tory party split from top to bottom on the dynastic question, when the time for nuances and reserves drew to an end, and the actual choice became imminent between Restoration of the House of Stuart or Accession of the House of Hanover.

When the highest questions of Church and State were thus inseparable, the boundary between religion and politics could neither be defined nor observed. It was a common saying, doubtless greatly exaggerated, that more was heard in the parish pulpit of Charles the Martyr than of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless the reigns of William and Anne were a period of purely religious activity and revival, which left a permanent mark on the life of the country, and sowed the seed of great developments in the future. An age to which we owe the Charity Schools and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was not wholly absorbed in the rancorous political feuds of High and Low Church. In some of these better activities, members of the two Church parties co-operated with each other and with the Dissenters, and were greatly helped by Robert Nelson, the lay Nonjuror, a man in whom the instinct to lend a hand to every good

cause worked more powerfully than the exclusive and scholastic spirit of his sect.

The religious revival had its origin in the brief and stormy reign of James II. That King, having watched the conduct of English public men throughout the reign of his brother Charles, had drawn the conclusion that there was no religious conviction or moral feeling in England sufficient to resist the force of royal displeasure and royal favour, if steadily exercised, to make men change their religion. The challenge was an insult to the nation, perhaps not wholly undeserved. But it aroused a memorable response. It was not the treachery or intrigue of individuals that drove James from the throne, but the moral rally of a whole people. The Tory pamphleteer Davenant, in the early years of Anne, thus recalled how those times had stirred men's souls :

The measures King James the Second took to change the religion of the country, roused up fresh zeal in the minds of all sorts of men ; they embraced more straitly what they were in fear to lose. Courtiers did thrust themselves into the presence to quit their offices, rather than be brought to do what might prejudice the Church of England. Nor had the licentious ways of living in fleets and armies shaken our seamen and soldiers in their principles. They all stood firm. The clergy showed themselves prepared to die with their flocks and managed

the controversial parts of Divinity with primitive courage and admirable learning. The Churches were everywhere crowded, and the prospect of persecution, though peradventure at some distance, begot devotion.

The symptoms of this moral and religious revival did not wholly subside with the crisis that gave it birth. In the first instance it gave an immense impetus to the work of the already existing Religious Societies inside the Church of England. These Societies were groups of 'serious young men,' who came together, usually under the influence of some active clergyman, to strengthen each other in religious life and practice. *The original idea of John Wesley, many years later, was merely to form such 'societies' within the Church as those which that zealous Churchman his father had helped and defended in the reigns of William and Anne.* The first object of these groups was to promote a religious life in individuals and families, to encourage church attendance, family prayers and Bible study. But more public activities soon grew out of the impulse thus given. Of these activities some were carried on in rivalry to the Dissenters, others with their co-operation.

The Dissenters, who were excluded from both

the Universities by law, and from many schools either by law or by custom, had started all over the country a number of excellent schools and academies of their own, covering the whole field of primary, secondary and higher education. These caused much jealousy, and at the end of Anne's reign the High Churchmen at last succeeded in passing the Schism Act to suppress them—an act of persecution quickly repealed under George I. But the Church also reacted to the challenge of the Nonconformist schools in a more generous fashion. In the reign of Anne, Charity Schools were founded by hundreds all over England, to educate the children of the poor in reading, writing, moral discipline, and the principles of the Church of England. They were much needed, for the State did nothing for the education of the poor, and the ordinary parish had no sort of endowed school, though in many villages 'dames' and other unofficial persons taught rustics their letters in return for fees; here and there an endowed Grammar School gave secondary education to the middle class.

The able men at the head of the Charity School movement introduced the principle of democratic co-operation into the field of educational endowment. They did not depend merely

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on the support of a few wealthy founders. The policy at headquarters was to excite the local interest of a parish in the setting up of a school. Small shopkeepers and artisans were induced to subscribe and to collect subscriptions, and were taught to take a personal interest in the success, and a personal part in the control of the school for which they helped yearly to pay. The principle of 'joint stock enterprise' was being applied to many sides of life in that era, among others to the cause of philanthropy and education. By the end of Anne's reign there were 5000 or more boys and girls attending the new Charity Schools in the London area, and some 20,000 in the rest of England. The movement was already being taken up in Scotland by the General Assembly. Essential parts of the scheme were to clothe the children decently while at school, and to apprentice them to good trades afterwards. In 1708 a 'poor boy' could be clothed at nine shillings and twopence, and a 'poor girl' at ten shillings and threepence in one of the London schools.

Another characteristic organization of this period was 'The Society for the Reformation of Manners.' In its open ranks Churchmen and Dissenters co-operated against the licence of the

age. Scores of thousands of tracts were issued against drunkenness, swearing, public indecency and Sunday trading. We know not what success attended the *Kind cautions against swearing* distributed among the hackney coachmen of London, and the similar *Kind cautions to watermen* distributed among the West Country bargees. More effective, perhaps, were the innumerable prosecutions instituted. Magistrates were shamed into enforcing laws which had become obsolete. These activities aroused furious opposition. Some of the High Churchmen, like Sacheverell, clamoured for the ‘ancient discipline of the Church’ to suppress vice, immorality, heresy and schism, instead of this new-fangled Society for the Reformation of Manners in which laymen and even Dissenters were allowed to take a part. Some prudent Bishops like Sharp, and Judges like Holt, feared that organized delation would lead to ill-feeling, corruption and blackmail. Many magistrates positively refused to receive the evidence of the philanthropic informers. The mob in some places was dangerous, and at least one active member of the Society was murdered outright.

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but a person of quality could safely swear in a public place. There was, indeed, a strong body of opinion that supported these proceedings. Many quiet citizens had found the magistrates, ever since the Restoration, scandalously lax in restraining drunkards from annoying the sober, in protecting women from insult, and in preserving any show of decency and order. Nor was Sunday trading really desired by the bulk of the community. The Mayor of Deal, a courageous and energetic man, undertook single-handed a crusade against the behaviour of the town, carried most of his points and was re-elected Mayor in 1708. It is indeed probable that many of the prosecutions, especially for swearing and for travelling on Sunday, were vexatious, and the time came under the Georges when the Society was doing as much harm as good, and could disappear. But its activities in the reign of Anne helped to make the streets and taverns less unpleasant for decent people, to reduce drunkenness and to secure Sunday as a day of rest from business and labour.

The more gloomy side of the English Sunday struck a German visitor in 1710 :

In the afternoon to St. James's Park, to see the crowds. No other diversion is allowed on Sunday,

which is nowhere more strictly kept ; not only is all play forbidden, and public-houses closed, but few even of the boats and hackney coaches may ply. Our hostess would not even allow the strangers to play the *riol di Gamba* or the flute, lest she should be punished.

He added, rather sourly, that Sunday observance was the only visible sign that the English were Christians at all.

But the most important and lasting impression of the religious revival was made by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and its offshoot, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The self-same men were the supporters of both, above all the indefatigable Dr. Thomas Bray. The same spirit as afterwards characterized the societies that abolished the Slave Trade and Slavery, inspired these voluntary societies of evangelists, lay and clerical, High and Low Church, Nonjuror and Nonconformist. The last years of William's reign and the first of Anne's saw them fully at work. The diffusion of Bibles and of other religious literature was their chief object. They were therefore great advocates of the Charity Schools where the poor could be taught to read them ; the two movements went side by side. The Society's publications were welcomed by

Marlborough in the army, and by Benbow and Rooke in the fleet. Cheap Bibles and Prayer Books were furnished in the country districts. And a supply of Bibles and other books to America was begun on a large scale, and to the rest of the world on a scale, modest indeed as compared to the gigantic work of the Society in later years, but ever growing with the growing power and wealth of England oversea. These activities betokened an instinctive movement of the English religious world to get away, on one side at least, from the denominational and political feuds in which it was entangled, into a field of broader vision, where zeal might produce something better than hate.

In the reign of Anne, as also long before and long after, religious differences were the motive force behind political passions. It is doubly impossible, therefore, for the English historian to ignore religion, if he would explain other phenomena. But he must not be tempted to forget that there was more in the religious sense of the nation than the feuds out of which, incidentally, our political liberties in large part arose. The religious life of many quiet parishes and humble families moved on its way, little concerned with

partisanship of High and Low Church ; English religion was, in the main, a free and healthy function of that old-world life, nicely guiding itself between superstition and fanaticism on the one side and material barbarism on the other.

The movement towards philanthropy instead of persecution, as an outlet for religious enthusiasm, was one of the characteristic fruits of the Revolution, as also was the improvement in public justice, both political and criminal. Because the Revolution Settlement was not a party victory, but an agreed compromise between Whig and Tory, Church and Dissent, it made humanity, moderation and co-operation the main current of affairs in the Eighteenth Century. The stabilizing and securing of these gains, in the face of violent counsels urging a return to former methods, was not yet certain when Anne came to the throne ; but she herself and her chosen servant, Marlborough, stood, with certain reserves, for the new system of moderation at home, and were prepared to defend it in arms against assault from abroad. By proclaiming the Pretender a few months before Anne's accession, Louis XIV had for the time rallied the whole nation to the Revolution Settlement. The Tories had resented his action no less fiercely than the Whigs. Above all, the

great City of London was behind the new system and ready to defend it against King Louis with purse and person. In London, more easily than elsewhere, Churchmen and Dissenters co-operated in philanthropic or patriotic causes, and religious toleration was regarded as essential to the life of a great trading community. Such a trading community London was already, and the whole of England was on the way to become.

CHAPTER IV

Two miles away from the Parliament at Westminster and the Queen's Court at St. James's lay the centre of the greatest City in the world, less under the jurisdiction of Court and Parliament than any other portion of English soil. London was governed by her own freely elected magistrates ; policed, in so far as she was policed at all, by her own constables ; guarded by her own militia ; and rendered formidable to the neighbouring seat of government by the largest and least manageable mob in the island. With only a tenth part of her present population, and much less than a tenth of her present area, London had more than her present relative importance. She surpassed her nearest English rivals, Bristol and Norwich, at least fifteen times in number of inhabitants. Her merchants and her markets controlled the larger business operations of the towns and villages of England, ' sucking the vitals of trade to herself.' It was the peculiar boast of the men of Bristol that they

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according to the religious requirements of the hour. It was to combat this state of things that the Charity Schools were being founded by public subscription, and that in 1711 Parliament voted the taxpayers' money to build fifty new churches in the suburbs for several hundred thousand persons unprovided for by the Established Church; the Dissenters, whom the Committee reckoned at 100,000 in that district, already had their own chapels.¹ Similarly, it was to remedy the material wants of this neglected mass of humanity that under the first two Georges hospitals were founded by private benevolence, and medical assistance was provided. The material and medical advance in conditions of London life under the Georges so lowered the death-rate, that the population went up with startling rapidity in the period of the early Industrial Revolution. We may imagine then what the life of the London poor was like in Hogarth's boyhood.

But London was above all a city of contrasts. The port and mart where the goods of England and the world were exchanged, required not only the muscular efforts of unskilled labour, but a supervising army of foremen, clerks, shop-

¹ See p. 100, above; *H. of C. Journals*, April 6, 1711.

keepers and middlemen of every variety. Moreover, London was not only a mart ; she was also the seat of manufactures, of finishing processes and luxury trades, employing the most skilled workmen in the island. Many thousands of Huguenot silk manufacturers had recently settled in Spitalfields, and other skilled trades previously conducted in France were now practised in Longacre and Soho by refugees who were rapidly becoming Englishmen and were already voting Whig. The finest native craftsmanship was also concentrated in London. In the best shops of the City the apprentices were sons of country gentlemen, likely to die richer than their elder brothers, and dressing in full-bottomed wigs when off duty. Greater London was the centre of English literary and intellectual life, and of fashion, law and government. For all these reasons the capital contained, alongside of the most brutal ignorance, an immense and varied stock of skill and intellect. London wits were sharpened, not only by the processes of national and world commerce, but by daily contact with the lawyers and politicians of Westminster, and with the noblemen and persons of fashion of St. James's. During the season, the leaders of Society lived in private mansions or in boarding houses west of

again, and leagued with France against her liberties. Taking advantage of Whig and Tory divisions in the City, the royal brothers seized her Charters, and made her for awhile the slave of arbitrary power. James lived to pay the price. On the rumour that William of Orange was about to sail, the Lord Chancellor Jeffreys humbly brought back the old Charters to Guild Hall, too late to save himself and his master. When the crown was offered to William and Mary on terms stricter than the terms of Charles II's restoration, London endorsed the deed, without any of those hesitations and regrets that moved some of the other elements in the body politic.

Thenceforth the City was the surest bulwark of the new regime. And in return the Revolution Settlement offered complete security to the restored privileges of London, and to the high place claimed by London in the counsels of the State. The City might have only four members in Parliament, but after the Revolution she exercised an influence like that of a separate estate of the Realm. That influence, unknown to the law of the constitution, was resented by the Tory squires, who held that political power should be monopolized by the landholders. But the governments of the Revolution, whether

Whig or Tory, had to fight for their life with France, and only the City could supply the sinews of war. The establishment of the Bank and the National Debt in William's reign forged new links between the Ministers and the Merchants, and emphasized the political and financial meaning of the new constitution.

To these things also Anne was heir. Whether she called herself Whig or Tory, High Church or Low, she must accept the alliance with London because she was heir to the Revolution, and needed defence against Louis XIV and his client, her brother on whose throne she sat. And the men of London, on their part, required in 1702 that their trade with the Mediterranean and America should be saved from the open attack of the new Franco-Spanish power. The capital would never again suffer the government to assume towards France the dependent attitude of Charles and James II. And so, by a series of linked inexorable facts of public life, no less than by her private attachment to Sarah Churchill, Anne was bound to choose Marlborough and Godolphin as her confidential advisers rather than her kinsman Rochester and the more high-flying Tories, who did not see things at home and abroad as the City saw them. In the November

after Anne had ascended the throne, a foreigner noted :

In the evening there was an illumination in the City, in memory of King William's coming. [And next day] a Pope of straw with the Devil behind him, are set on a cart : they go from house to house begging contributions for a great bonfire, into which they cast Pope and Devil.

With London in this mood, there might be a Tory Queen and a Tory Parliament, but none the less let Louis and the Pretender beware. Seven years later, when Louis had been brought low and London mobs began to cheer for Sacheverell and to burn Meeting Houses instead of Popes, the deferred High Church holiday could safely take place.¹

The Tower of London, which was to have overawed the citizens, had been built by William the Conqueror on the side of the City away from Westminster. Partly for that reason, it had not overawed them long. In Stuart times it could not, in its isolated position, serve to protect Westminster and Whitehall from the insults of the London mob. In Anne's reign the Tower still

¹ Ned Ward, in his Tory poem *Vulgar Britannicus*, celebrating the burning of Meeting Houses by the Sacheverell mob in 1709, distinctly and repeatedly states that this London mob had previously been Whiggish (e.g. at pp. 43-47 of the ed. of 1710).

served as the great Arsenal whence cannon and gunpowder were shipped to the wars overseas, and as the Mint presided over by Newton himself as Master. Its outer walls enclosed a network of streets inhabited by the officers of these two establishments. On occasion it was still a State prison. But already it had its lighter side, as the Zoo and Museum of the Capital. Visitors were taken to see the Crown Jewels, and the newly finished Armoury where a line of English Kings sat mounted in battle array. The stock of lions and other wild beasts had been maintained ever since the days when the Tower had been a favourite residence of mediæval kings; it was finely replenished by presents to Queen Anne from the monarchs of North African 'Barbary,' with whom the English merchants traded, and with whom the captors of Gibraltar made treaties of alliance against France and Spain.

Between the Tower and Temple Bar stretched the length of the City proper; its meagre breadth extended northwards from the river only as far as the 'bars' of Smithfield, Holborn and Whitechapel.¹ But the march of bricks and

¹ These 'bar' boundaries were, of course, more extensive than the original City bounded by the wall and gates, e.g. Temple Bar was farther west than Ludgate.

mortar had burst the municipal bounds, chiefly in a westerly direction, attracted towards the seat of national government at Westminster. At the Strand began the jurisdiction of that City. But the municipal privileges of Westminster were no rival to those of London. Neither London nor the Court nor Parliament had ever wished to have to deal with a Lord Mayor of Westminster. So Westminster was never permitted to enjoy self-government, or to acquire a corporate sense. It was ruled by twelve burgesses appointed for life by the High Steward, and even their powers were being rapidly superseded by those of the Justices of the Peace and of the Vestries of the different parishes. It is true that the parliamentary franchise in Westminster was democratic, and in the days when most boroughs had a narrow franchise, the election of a member of Parliament for Westminster caused unusual political excitement long before the time of Charles Fox, as when General Stanhope stood in 1710 in the Whig interest and was defeated after a fierce contest and a hot canvass. But Westminster's local government was a mere bureaucracy, so far as it was anything better than an anarchy of rival jurisdictions.

On the other hand, the City of London

enjoyed complete self-government in an unusually democratic form. At that time very few boroughs in England were so free of the element of oligarchy, unless it were Ipswich and Norwich. In London as many as 12,000 ratepaying householders voted in their respective Wards to elect the 26 Aldermen and 200 Common Councillors. These ratepayers at the Wards were almost identical with the Liverymen of the 89 Gilds and Companies : in their double capacity they controlled by their votes the complicated mediæval machinery of London self-government.

The electorate of shopkeepers chose men of their own class to represent them on the Common Council, rather than the great merchant princes known in the world of high finance and politics. The City magnates were more often chosen as Aldermen. Common pride in the privileges and power of London, and jealous care for her independence, prevented a serious breach between the great men of the Exchange and the shop-keeping democracy. But there was sometimes friction, and in the course of Anne's reign a tendency became apparent for the democratic Common Council to be Tory, and for the Mayor, Aldermen and wealthy City magnates to be Whig.

The jurisdiction of London's elected magistrates was not confined to the area of their own City. Their power stopped short of Westminster, but they clipped it in on every side. They possessed the Shrievalty of Middlesex and the Bailiwick of Southwark. They administered and taxed the port of London. The Lord Mayor was Conservator of the river from Gravesend and Tilbury up to a point just above Staines Bridge—a course of over sixty miles. London levied coal duties in a radius of twelve miles, and enforced her monopoly of markets in a radius of seven.

The City proper was the most densely populated acreage in England. It was not, as now, abandoned to 'cats and caretakers' at nightfall; the merchant prince and the shopkeeper slept, each with his family, over his place of business—servants and prentices above in the garrets, and porters and messengers packed away anywhere in cellarage and warehouse. Old Jewry and Basinghall Street, in particular, were reputed to contain the homes of some of the richest men in England. But the nobility of the realm had already deserted their ancestral palaces in the crowded City, whence gardens were vanishing

apace: 'the great' resided, during the season, round Covent Garden, Piccadilly, Bloomsbury, or St. James's Square, or in some other section of Westminster. And the rich merchants, who still inhabited their beloved City for reasons alike of business and of sentiment, had also their country houses and villas among the woods, fields and pleasant villages within a twenty-mile radius of London. In their suburban and riverside retreats—in Hampstead, West Ham, Walthamstow, and below Epsom Downs, already a great pleasure resort, and especially along the green shores of the Thames from Chelsea upwards—there was perhaps as much good *eating and drinking done by Londoners as in the City itself*. The poorer sort walked out for a holiday in the country to less distant places like Dulwich.

In London the river was the most crowded of the highways. Passengers in boats were perpetually threading the heavy commercial traffic, to the accompaniment of volleys of traditional abuse exchanged between boatmen and bargees. On the north bank, between London Bridge and the Parliament Stairs were at least thirty landing places, where boats waited by the steps to carry people along or across the river. Statesmen and

Since coal was burnt on almost every London hearth, the air was so infected that a foreign scholar complained 'whenever I examine London books I make my ruffles as black as coal.' On days when the north-east wind carried the smoke-cloud, even Chelsea became dangerous to the asthmatic, as the philosopher Earl of Shaftesbury had reason to complain. There is no wonder that King William had lived at Hampton Court when he could, and at Kensington when he must. Westminster would have been death to him. Anne, on her accession, could safely move the royal residence from country to town, from Kensington to St. James's Palace. But that was all the satisfaction she would give to her loving subjects ; not only was she often at Bath and yet more often at Windsor, but, even when she came to town, the doors of St. James's were open only to her Ministers and her female favourites, and to those whom Ministers or favourites introduced by the front stairs or the back. Throughout her reign she was

that she could only occasionally consent to endure.

Queen Anne therefore kept Court as little as her predecessor. Metaphorically as well as literally, the Whitehall of the Merry Monarch lay in ruins, never to rise again. Except the Banqueting House of tragic memory, the whole Palace had been burnt in 1698, and its roofless walls still cumbered the river bank. Buckingham House was still the residence of a subject. The fashionable world parading in chairs and six-horse coaches in the Mall, or sauntering in the more private garden immediately below the windows of St. James's Palace, had to be content with remembering that they were near the invisible Queen. It was more to the point that in the other direction the Houses of Parliament were but a few minutes' walk away from the centre of fashion.

As in the reign of Charles II, the Coffee House was still the centre of social life. It afforded a much needed relaxation of the severe drinking habits of the time, for alcohol was not to be had on the premises. A list of *some of the Coffee Houses* in Queen Anne's reign runs to nearly five hundred names. Every respectable Londoner

had his favourite house, where his friends or clients could seek him at known hours.

‘ Remember, John,
‘ If any ask, to th’ Coffee House I’m gone,’

says the citizen to his apprentice as he leaves the shop.

Then at Lloyd’s Coffee House he never fails
To read the letters and attend the sales.¹

The *beau monde* assembled at White’s Chocolate House in St. James’s Street, where, as Harley bitterly complained to Swift, young noblemen were fleeced and corrupted by fashionable gamblers and profligates. Tories went to the Cocoa Tree Chocolate House, Whigs to St. James’s Coffee House. Will’s, near Covent Garden, was the resort of poets, critics and their patrons; Truby’s served the clergy, and the Grecian the world of scholarship; nor were there lacking houses for Dissenters, for Quakers,

¹ In Ned Ward’s *Wealthy Shopkeeper* (1706) his day is thus apportioned: rise at 5; counting-house till 8; then breakfast on toast and Cheshire cheese; in his shop for two hours; then a neighbouring coffee house for news; shop again, till dinner at home (over the shop) at 12 on a ‘thundering joint’; 1 o’clock on Change; 3, Lloyd’s Coffee House for business; shop again for an hour; then another coffee house (not Lloyd’s) for recreation, followed by ‘sack shop’ to drink with acquaintances, till home for ‘a light supper’ and so to bed ‘before Bow Bell rings nine.’

for Papists and for Jacobites. The 'universal liberty of speech of the English nation' uttered amid clouds of tobacco smoke, with equal vehemence whether against the Government and the Church, or against their enemies, had long been the wonder of foreigners; it was the quintessence of Coffee House life.

The Coffee House filled the place now occupied by the Club, but in a more cheap and informal manner, and with a greater admission of strangers. In days when men stood much on their rank, it had a levelling influence: at the Coffee House 'you will see blue ribbons and stars sitting familiarly with private gentlemen as if they had left their quality and degrees of distance at home.' But that was not all. In days before telegrams and effective journalism, news could be most easily obtained at the Coffee House. The Windsor, at Charing Cross, advertised itself as supplying the 'best chocolate at twelve pence the quart and the translation of the *Harlem Courant* soon after the post is come in.' Not only was news sought for its political, military and general interest, but for the strictly business purposes of commerce as at Lloyd's. Edward Lloyd, whose surname instantly rises to men's lips when they speak of shipping to-day,

was, when he walked the earth, nothing more nor less than a Coffee House keeper in Lombard Street in Queen Anne's reign. To his house merchants came for the latest information, and for the personal intercourse and advice necessary for all transactions. Newspapers had then no commercial column and no details of shipping. The spoken word did many things that print does to-day, and for merchants the word was spoken at Lloyd's. Before Anne's reign ended Lloyd had set up a pulpit for auctions and for reading out the news.

At six o'clock the theatres began to fill. A patriotic Briton has thus described the scene :

The pit contains the gentlemen on benches ; and on the first story of boxes sit all the ladies of quality ; in the second, the citizens' wives and daughters ; and in the third, the common people and footmen ; so that between the acts you are as much diverted by viewing the beauties of the audience, as while they act with the subject of the play ; and the whole is illuminated to the greatest advantage. Whereas abroad, the stage only being illuminated, and the lodge or boxes close, you lose the pleasure of seeing the company. And indeed the English have reason in this, for no nation in the world can show such an assembly of shining beauties as here.

The footmen aloft in 'Olympus,' had been originally admitted there free to form a *claque*, and had conspired to treat this concession as their inalienable privilege; they had become the tyrants of the house, a plague to managers and to the politer part of the audience, interrupting the most affecting passages in the play with savage clamour.

But on the whole the London theatres catered for people who were cultured or desired to be thought so. The drama had not yet been divorced from literature to marry commerce, and was still conducted on a repertory basis. Shakespeare was gaining rather than losing ground, though in versions disastrously mangled. The genius of Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle in the early years of Anne, and the critiques of the *Spectator* in the latter part of the reign were preparing the way for the apotheosis of the national poet in the era of Garrick and Johnson. Actors' reputations were made in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, as they seldom are to-day.

Sometimes, indeed, the ladies of the audience were insensible even to the charms of Betterton acting Shakespeare. In 1709 a susceptible Irish baronet complains 'that they can talk of indifferent things while the tenderest passions of

Vanbrugh's Prologues. The clerical critics were able to draw on a formidable armoury of undesirable passages quoted from the dramas of the day. The assault, though exaggerated and in part misdirected, was neither unprovoked nor ineffectual. Colley Cibber, actor-manager and dramatist, confessed that :

the calling our dramatic writers to a strict account had a very wholesome effect. They were now a great deal more upon their guard ; indecencies were no longer wit ; and by degrees the fair sex came again to fill the boxes on the first day of a new comedy without fear or censure.

Colley Cibber's own play, *The Careless Husband*, which appeared in 1704, turns on the reclamation of an erring husband by the virtues of his wife. Cibber, who was very far from being the dullard that Pope afterwards made him out, had perceived shortly after the accession of Anne that the moment had come for a play with a moral ending, but still enlivened by dialogue and situation not too refined : with the help of the rising star of Nance Oldfield, *The Careless Husband* became the theatrical success of the winter that followed Blenheim. The dramas of Anne's reign were, on the average, less heartless than those of the preceding decades. The comedies of Addison,

Steele and Mrs. Centlivre gave a kindlier and less cynical view of men and women than the abler work of Congreve, who never wrote a play after 1700. Indeed, by the end of the Queen's reign sentimentalism was a fault of the modern playwrights, both comic and tragic. The tragedies of Rowe, like the essays and plays of Addison, were addressed to 'the fair sex' that now mingled with the male part of the audience without fear of being put to the blush. And increasingly the tone of the theatre was set by the middle classes rather than by the Court. The stage therefore became more respectable and more sentimental than in the period of the Restoration Comedy.

One peculiarity of the stage at this time was that nearly all the dramatists were Whigs, and that consequently the army, during the Marlborough wars, was represented in a sympathetic light, instead of being pursued with the rancour which Tory writers like Swift so often showed in speaking of a redcoat. Congreve, Addison, Rowe, Mrs. Centlivre and Colley Cibber were Whigs, and Farquhar, Vanbrugh and Steele were not only Whigs but soldiers. But the politics of the audience was by no means entirely Whig. Indeed, during the period of Marlborough's

greatest unpopularity with the Tories, at the close of the war which he had won for England, the management thought fit to interpolate in the middle of the deceased Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer* a chorus of soldiers in uniform, to sing a scurrilous song against Marlborough's avarice, ending every verse with the chorus :

But Marlborough! not a penny.

One of the Duke's daughters who was present 'blushed scarlet,' but the play was interrupted for a quarter of an hour by the frenzied cheering of the Tory ladies and gentlemen.

In music, the age of Anne saw the invasion and conquest of England by the Italian Opera, under the able leadership of Nicolini and his band of eunuchs. There was a short struggle, in which native musical tradition attempted to hold its own. Steele, in the Epilogue to his *Tender Husband*, exhorted the audience,

No more th' Italian squalling tribe admit,
In tongues unknown ; 'tis Popery in wit,

while Addison's other friend Tickell denounced it as,

Nonsense well tuned and sweet stupidity.

But the ladies loved to see 'Nicolini strangle a lion with great gallantry,' and the Italian opera

took hold. It became the vogue to depreciate Purcell and old English songs and music, once held to be the best in Europe. Nothing is more striking than the inability of the English to stand by their native traditions in art ; the following of French fashions in so many things had prepared the way for this musical surrender to the Italians. By the end of the reign Addison had sadly to admit : 'The foreign tone and manner which are expected in everything now performed among us, has put music itself to a stand.' It was not till the following reign that the ingenious Mr. Gay created in the comic or ballad Opera a refuge for English humour and English musical genius, where they survived in a state of semi-obscurity, with the help of Dibdin, till the advent of Gilbert and Sullivan.

The reading public was still so small that authors could not live by their sales alone. It is true that Defoe, Addison and Swift were creating forms of literature and journalism that greatly enlarged the area influenced by the pen. But patronage was still necessary for authors to subsist, and it could be courted in a variety of ways : the aspirant might present copies, or dedicate editions of his works to 'a person of quality,'

who might reward him with a bag of guineas, or haply with a living or with a post in public or private service ; or else he might write political poems, pamphlets and Reviews for the Whig or Tory parties, to earn similar rewards from the party leaders.

Of the personal relationship of author and patron, the following example will serve, though here too an element of the political can perhaps be detected : a certain Joseph Harris writes to Thomas Coke, M.P. :

Some time since I presented to your honour a book which I writ on my Lord Duke of Marlborough ; and last summer I presented another book to you, called Luzzara, being an encomium on Prince Eugene of Savoy. As yet I have never had any return for either of those presents to your honour, wherefore now, by reason I am very ill and lame of rheumatism, I humbly make bold to address myself to your honour either for small charity, or for return of the books that I may present them to *some other persons of quality*. I have nothing but what I get by translating out of Latin, Greek and Spanish to maintain my wife and four children.

There speaks the authentic, unhappy voice of Grub Street. There were many more servants of the Muse living like poor Harris than like Secretary Addison, Dean Swift or Sir Richard Steele.

In his life of Matthew Prior, Dr. Johnson remarks : ' Throughout the reigns of William and Anne no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry.' The flood of such patriotic verses, dedicated to all the statesmen and generals in the country, has sunk, as floods sink, into the ground in deserved oblivion, all save Addison's *Campaign* that still adds lustre to Blenheim. But the prose of Whig and Tory polemics contained a larger proportion of stuff destined to endure : Swift and Addison, as journalists, spoke to their day, but they have been overheard by the ages. The importance of the pamphlet and of the political Review, and the price that political leaders were ready to pay the writers thereof, naturally resulted from government by Parliament and by public opinion. It was for this reason that Voltaire in his youth found that literary men were much more highly esteemed in England than in his own despotically governed country. Political power could not be exercised in England unless a wide public had first been persuaded. As there was then no reporting of speeches or publication of parliamentary debates, and very few political meetings of any kind, literary men had to be employed to say to the people what the political leaders wished to have said. Men with

this gift occupied, therefore, a very high place in the society of Queen Anne's reign, while their brother poets were starving in garrets.

The rich rewards of political literature were one of the causes why men of letters, though they still wrote verse as well as prose, were turning away even in their verse from poetry and imagination to the prosaic and journalistic spirit of the clear, rational Eighteenth Century. Milton, indeed, had written political pamphlets, but their best passages had retained the quality of great poetry rather than of skilled pamphleteering. This cannot be said of any writer in the age of Anne.

The Censorship had been removed in 1695 and a vested interest in free literature had consequently sprung up. When it was proposed to restore the censorship in 1703 'to restrain the licentiousness of the press,' the workmen printers of London petitioned the House of Commons that they would be thrown out of work in great numbers if the Bill became law. This national industry born of freedom was settled almost entirely in the Capital. London sent to the farthest ends of the land the outpourings of her seventy printing and publishing houses.

In the days of the Popish Plot and the Revolution, it had been customary to satisfy the thirst for news by 'newsletters' in manuscript sent down from the capital to correspondents in the provinces. But when Anne ascended the throne, written communications were beginning to be replaced by the printing of a dozen London newspapers. The newspaper usually consisted of a single sheet of two printed sides, sometimes folded into four pages ; it appeared two or three times in the week, and contained the main items of home and foreign intelligence, set down without comment. The last half page was devoted to advertisements of such items as patent medicines, sales of houses, meetings for 'the noble and heroic sport of cockfighting,' or the vent of Portugal wine by Messrs. Brook and Hellier. Some papers gave a Tory twist to their news, like the *Postboy*, or a Whig twist like the *Postman*. But the news was much the same in all, and there was no leading article.

There was, however, another type of periodical, like the *Whig Observer* and Defoe's *Review* in the early years of the Queen's reign, giving little news but commenting at length upon news reported elsewhere. A few years later this new method of journalism reached its perfection in the *Spectators* and *Examiners* of Steele, Addison and Swift.

By the end of the reign, a few of the largest provincial capitals had started newspapers of their own, upon the London model. Such was the *Newcastle Courant* begun in 1711. The first serious check to the rapid and healthy growth of journalism that signalized the reign of Anne was the effective measure taken to muzzle the press by Bolingbroke, when in 1712 he put a heavy duty on newspapers and their advertisements.

Some counties had no printing presses at all, and the greatest provincial capitals seldom had more than one or two apiece. All England looked to London as the original source of news, opinions and arguments of every colour in politics, religion, literature and fashion—and to London, Oxford and Cambridge for works of learning. The printer was generally a publisher, and the publisher was generally a bookseller, who sold the books he printed. The London booksellers were most of them attached either to the Whig or Tory cause, and some of them to the Jacobite.¹

¹ Nichols's *Lit. Anecdotes* (1812), I, pp. 289-312. The printer and publisher in Newcastle-upon-Tyne put the following advertisement into his paper, the *Newcastle Courant*, in 1711: 'This is to give notice to all Gentlemen and lovers of learning who are willing to publish any book in the Northern parts, that John White, printer, living in the Close in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, is furnished with great variety of letters and presses and will be ready to print the same upon reasonable terms.'

London was the focus not only of literature, journalism and public news, but even of private correspondence. The General Post Office, with a staff of forty sorters, was established in Lombard Street, and nearly all letters in England sent by the public post had to pass through it: the first 'cross posts,' going straight between two important towns without touching London, were only set up a few years before Anne came to the throne. But in the rural parts letters were sent by private messengers to a much greater extent than now. The London area already enjoyed a penny post, under the management of the Lombard Street Office, with delivery every few hours.

The time which it took for the Post Office to deliver letters in the country, like the pace of all traffic by land, varied greatly according to the wet or dry condition of the roads. The postboys reckoned to accomplish the journey from London to Edinburgh in six days on the average. But in the storms of winter, postboy, horse and mail-bag were apt to disappear in crossing a flooded valley: the horse may well have been a greater loss than the letters, of which there was sometimes only one for all Scotland in the mail from London. On a fine summer day, a good coach-and-four

could accomplish the fifty-three miles from London to Cambridge between five in the morning and eight at night, a record easily broken in modern times by undergraduates on foot. Only the very best coaches had springs, and the cumbrous machines were seldom moved at a trot, except on the not infrequent appearance of a horseman of suspicious aspect. Highwaymen lurked in security in the unfelled thickets and unenclosed heaths, and were in league with many keepers of inns, like Boniface in the *Beaux' Stratagem*. In Scotland, indeed, the highwayman was unknown ; he would have wearied of waiting for the rare passengers, and would have been little richer after their plunder than before. But in England no one began a journey wholly free from the fear of such encounters.

A more common sight upon the roads than the coach was the yet slower 'hooded waggon,' with passengers and luggage inside, and the carrier walking at the head of his eight horses. And more usual than any form of wheeled vehicle was the string of laden pack-horses, sometimes as many as fifty in a single file, following a leader with a bell round its neck.

During the war with France, the most usual route to the Continent lay through Harwich and

Rotterdam. Travellers in an ordinary coach took two days between London and Harwich, and they were often held up a week at the port, waiting for weather in which to cross, with 'nothing to do, poor fare and a terribly long bill' at the inn. The crossing itself might take another week, or might be accomplished in twenty-four hours if the breeze held and the French privateers from Dunkirk were avoided.

Even on the Great North Road, delays and perils were much increased in winter or foul weather. When in January 1709 the antiquarian Thoresby was leaving Huntingdon for London, the guide refused to proceed southward after a night of snow and flood. The party, however, rode on without him, causing the good folks of Royston to run out of their houses to gaze at such venturous travellers. They made thirty miles that day and slept at Puckeridge. Next day they reached London, but not before Thoresby's horse had plunged belly deep into the water by the roadside at Enfield, 'by the breaking of the ice.'

Such in winter was the Great North Road itself, in its best section. North of Grantham it consisted only of a narrow stone causeway with soft ground on both sides. On such a highway wheeled traffic could scarcely pass in wet weather ;

and even horsemen, when shoved off the causeway by the pack-horse trains, sometimes had difficulty in getting back out of the morass into the middle of the road. Many highways were of this 'causeway' type. Village roads were mere mud tracks or broad green lanes. It was well, perhaps, that so many roads were unenclosed for the greater part of their length, for passengers were therefore able to ride or walk off the morass of the road itself through the neighbouring heaths or corn-fields. Farmers complained, but the law upheld the rights of the distressed traveller in this matter. In enclosed counties like Kent, two horsemen could scarcely squeeze past one another at many points on the main road between London and Canterbury, and a coach entirely blocked the way between the hedges. The Weald of Sussex, described as 'a sink fourteen miles broad,' was so ill drained that the roads between the North and South Downs were deep in mud till the middle of a dry summer. One picture by Defoe stays in the mind :

Going to a Church in a country village not far from Lewis I saw an ancient lady, and a lady of very good quality I assure you, drawn to Church in her coach with six oxen; nor was it done in frolic or humour, but mere necessity, the way being so stiff and deep, that no horses could go in it.

The badness of the roads was due to the want of any adequate administrative machinery for their reconstruction or repair. Every parish through which a road passed was legally bound to maintain it by six days a year of unpaid labour given by the farmers, under no supervision save one of themselves chosen as surveyor. The unfairness of laying the burden of repair not on the users of the great roads, but on the parishes through which they happened to pass, was equalled by the folly of expecting farmers, who had no interest in the matter, to act gratuitously as skilled makers of highways. The result was that few hard roads had been made since the Romans left the island. In the Middle Ages, when there was little commerce, this had mattered but little. Under the later Stuarts, when commerce was large and rapidly increasing, it mattered much ; it was beginning to be felt as a national disgrace. The new system of turnpikes to make the users of the road pay for its upkeep was therefore enforced in a few of the worst sections by Acts of Parliament. When Anne came to the throne the usual machinery of local Justices of the Peace was employed to manage the turnpikes, but towards the end of the reign special bodies of Turnpike Trustees

were sometimes established by Statute. It was not, however, till the House of Hanover had been some time on the throne that anything approaching a general reform was effected by this means.

Under such conditions, sea and river traffic, however slow, held a great advantage over road traffic, especially for heavy goods. Fish could be sent up from Lyme Regis to London by relays of fast trotting horses ; but coal came there by sea. Even so, while it cost but five shillings per chaldron at the Tyneside pit's mouth, it cost thirty shillings in London, and anything up to fifty shillings in the towns of the Upper Thames. This was partly because sea-borne coal was taxed, both to pay for the rebuilding of St. Paul's and to pay for the French war. Coal was cheaper in those towns of Yorkshire, Lancashire and the west Midlands to which it could be floated from the pit's mouth on rivers like the Calder or Severn. For coal carried on inland rivers was not taxed, like the coal carried by sea, neither was it exposed to the attacks of the Dunkirk privateers, nor harassed by the consequent restrictions of an inadequate convoy system supplied by the Royal Navy between Tyne and Thames.

standing half-way between the domestic and the factory system. The normal basis of industry still was apprenticeship, the only legal doorway to a trade whether for boys or girls. The apprentice system was often abused by cruel masters and mistresses, and pauper apprentices were at least as badly treated as children in the worst days of the subsequent factory system. There were no inspectors and no checks on ill usage. On the other hand, the apprentice was part of his master's 'family,' and the average man does not like to see unhappy faces at his own board and in his own household. Moreover, apprenticeship was invaluable for the discipline and skilled training that it provided during that important 'after-school age' so much neglected in our own day. It largely compensated for the deficiency of school education. Apprenticeship was the old English school of craftsmanship and of character.¹

Before they were old enough to be apprenticed, small children were sometimes set to work in their

¹ Already in Anne's reign there were complaints that apprenticeship was not made as universally obligatory as the laws dictated. In 1702 the Corporation of Kendal petitioned for a new and stricter law, because 'although there are laws against persons setting up any trade without having received seven years' apprenticeship, when such persons come to be prosecuted they meet with such favour that very few have been punished of late.' *H.M.C. Bagot*, R. 10, pt. iv., p. 336.

parents' cottages at an age full as early as the factory children of later times. Especially was spinning for the cloth industry conducted in this fashion : Defoe noticed with approval at Colchester and in the Taunton clothing region, that 'there was not a child in the town or in the villages round it of above five years old, but, if it was not neglected by its parents and untaught, could earn its bread.' Again in the clothing dales of the West Riding he found 'hardly anything above four years old but its hands were sufficient for its support.' Poor little things ! But at least, whenever their parents let them go to play, they had fields near at hand, instead of the boundless wilderness of slums.

Spinning was done chiefly in country cottages by women and children, and weaving chiefly in towns and urban districts by men. Both processes, though conducted under domestic conditions, required capitalist organization and supervision, either by employers, or by middlemen who bought the goods manufactured by the cottager. The methods by which the cloth trade was organized differed in the many different regions of England where it flourished.

While the coal trade of Anne's reign interests us especially because of its future, the cloth trade

was the typical industry of the time. Two-fifths of English exports consisted of cloth woven in England. Many of our domestic laws and many measures of our economic and foreign policy were aimed at the great national object of promoting the manufacture of cloth and pushing its sale at home and abroad. It was felt that here lay our real advantage over Dutch rivals in the carrying trade of the world, for we had this great staple manufacture with which to load our outgoing ships, whereas they had little to export except herrings, and acted mainly as carriers between other nations.

The cloth industry was encouraged by various legislative devices. Even the dead were compelled to be buried in good English cloth :

‘Odious ! in woollen ! ’twould a saint provoke’—
Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.¹

Severe laws were passed and partially enforced against exporting raw wool abroad to help foreign manufacturers. But ‘owling,’ or running of English raw wool to France, went on all through the war, from Romney Marsh in Kent, the favourite haunt of smugglers and Jacobites, or from Sussex and the Lincolnshire marshes, with

¹ Pope, *Moral Essays*, I.

many a skirmish between smugglers and dragoons. Much English wool was exported to the Continent from Scotland, with the connivance of the Scottish Government prior to the Union. Irish wool was smuggled to France on an even greater scale, and with more moral justification, because the English Parliament had in 1699 prohibited the export of Irish cloth, by one of the most iniquitous and short-sighted laws ever passed by Parliament in obedience to English trade jealousy, in utter disregard even of the ' Protestant interest ' in the neighbouring island.

The desire to keep open the great markets of the world for English cloth was a chief incentive to taking up arms in 1702 against the Franco-Spanish Power, which was at that moment, at the command of Louis XIV, proceeding to close Spain, the Netherlands, South America and the Mediterranean to our goods. The taking and keeping of Gibraltar in 1704 was symptomatic of more than military and naval ambition : a free entrance to the Mediterranean and Turkish trades was vital to the cloth industry. Not only were great quantities of our cloth sold in those parts, but our merchants brought back from Spain and Southern Italy oil used here in the manufacture of cloth. Spanish merino wool was

worked up in England and sold back as cloth to Spain herself, whose native industry was in the last stages of decline. Of late years the fine quality and great quantity of English-grown wool had been yet further increased by means of 'clover and other grass seeds' to feed the sheep. Our American Colonies were valued largely as markets for our cloth. In Russia, too, a great demand for it was growing up in the new century.

Only in the Far East it was impossible to sell the heavy English cloth, and this was the most damaging argument which the East India Company had to meet in pleading its cause before Parliament. But the tea and silk it brought to England sufficed to condone the high economic crimes of failing to sell English cloth and daring to export bullion to buy cloth substitutes. In vain the merchants of the rival Turkey Company pleaded that 'if silk be brought from India where it is bought cheap with bullion, it will ruin our trade with Turkey, whither we send cloth for their silk.' The demands of fashion and luxury outweighed the arguments of clothiers, Turkey merchants and orthodox economists. 'Our stately fops admire themselves better in an Indian dressing gown than in one made at

Spitalfields.' The ladies, besides, were all drinking 'tay.' So the Indian Trade was permitted to flourish, and in spite of that the Cloth Trade flourished as well.

Though the cloth trade was organized in the cities, the cloth was spun and woven for the most part in market towns and hamlets, in farms and cottages. Nor was the cloth manufacture exceptional in being thus seated amid rural surroundings. Industry was less urban than in Plantagenet times. Only a small part of the manufacturing activity of the country was any longer conducted within city walls or subjected to municipal control. It is true that many towns, especially London and certain other seaports, were much larger than of old, because commerce had increased, and commerce must needs be concentrated in cities. But many other towns had decayed or stood still, because manufacture had ceased to be municipal and had become national. The master workman, in choosing where to set up his workshop, was at more pains to plant himself outside the area of pettifogging borough regulations, than to seek safety within the walls of a city as in the rough society of the Middle Ages. The villages and open market towns were now sufficiently

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civilized and secure to become the homes of highly elaborated craftsmanship.

The return of industry to urban areas came later, with the advent of modern machinery and the modern factory system. But from Elizabeth to George III, the bulk of the industrial population lived under rural conditions of life. The typical Englishman was a villager, but a villager accustomed to meet men of various crafts, occupations and classes—by no means a mere rustic boor, ignorant of all save the plough handle. Ploughing and agricultural operations constitute indeed a highly skilled trade; but it was not only ploughmen, but all sorts and conditions of men who made up the society of the villages and small market towns during the Stuart and early Hanoverian reigns. Partly for this reason, the English of those times made famous colonists, handy men able to adapt themselves to new conditions, and to meet sudden and various demands on their ingenuity and skill, more easily than the ignorant serf of the feudal age, or the over-specialized miner, city workman and clerk of to-day.

Partly because industry had thus broken the bounds of municipal control, the municipal life of the boroughs was already in Anne's reign

suffering from senile decay. The corporate spirit of the burghers was so enfeebled that they could project no new forms to give it a fresh lease of life. They were content to watch the mediæval institutions of their City or Borough degenerate into antiquarian lumber, until at length the Municipal Reform Bill of 1835 swept it away and began a new era in town government on the basis of modern democracy.

Except in London and a few other towns, municipal government was oligarchical in one form or another. In some towns the oligarchy was of immemorial date ; in others the burgher rights of the Freemen were still in process of disappearing. If English trade had still, as in the Middle Ages, depended on efficient control by City Gilds and magistrates, the needs of commerce and industry would assuredly have caused a demand for Municipal Reform long before the era of Bentham. But in Anne's reign, so long as industry was unfettered, and so long as the individual enjoyed political, religious and economic liberty as those terms were then understood, inefficient and corrupt municipal government was not very deeply resented.

There was infinite variety among the governments of the numerous English Boroughs. Hardly

two of them were quite the same. One very common form of local government was that exercised by Justices of the Peace for the Borough, who were either identical with the Municipal Officers or were appointed by them. On these urban Justices of the Peace were conferred, within the area of the Borough, much the same powers as those enjoyed throughout the county as a whole by the Justices of the Peace nominated by the Crown. In this way, though there was no uniformity, there was a general similarity between the type of government in town and in country. This contributed to the peaceful character of English life in the Eighteenth Century. If there had been a self-assertive or democratic spirit in municipal life, it must have come into collision with the land-owning aristocracy that ruled the island. But as things were, the towns, with the notable exception of London, were nearly always ready to fall into line administratively and politically, obedient to the *mot d'ordre* for the country at large. As often as not, the citizens were willing to see the members of Parliament who were supposed to represent them at Westminster nominated by the landed grandees of the neighbourhood, who more and more asserted their ownership of 'rotten boroughs.' The other

side to this system of mutual accommodation was the respect paid by the ruling squirarchy to the real or supposed interests of trade. The squires usurped the Borough membership at Westminster, but they used their power there to wage wars and make laws and treaties in the interest of English industry and commerce.

In the rural districts there was even less local self-government than in the towns. It is true that the rural elections for Parliament were less farcical than the elections for rotten boroughs. But for purposes of local government there were no rural elections at all. Until the County Council Act of 1888 the English countryside was judged, administered, and rated by Justices of the Peace appointed by the Crown from among the local gentry. In Anne's reign the power of these magistrates was becoming yearly more independent and more extensive. Since the Revolution, the Crown was more than ever afraid to interfere with the proceedings of local magistrates whom it appointed. Early in Anne's reign, Defoe reported to Harley how in a dozen counties the High Tory justices were openly inciting the people against the Moderate Tory War Ministry. They did not seem to fear

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dismissal by the Crown merely because they were opposing its policy. On the other hand, there were many politicians who held the view that the rural magistracy should go in and out with the Ministry, that when there was a Tory Ministry all Whig Justices should be dismissed, or *vice versa*. In this matter there was no settled theory or practice. The Queen and some of her Ministers were for the moderate course in this as in other matters, while high-flying Tories and zealous Whigs clamoured for a system of 'spoils for the victors,' and the extrusion of all magistrates of the wrong party. Few disputes in the reign caused more bitterness, and few indeed were of greater importance than this unsettled question.

The power of the Justices of the Peace was constantly on the increase, as it had been for centuries past. In the absence of a paid bureaucracy like that which served the French Monarch, most new functions of government had to be placed on the shoulders of the Justices of the Peace. The limit of the ability and goodwill of these amateurs in government was the limit of royal power in England, as James II had learnt to his cost. Except the magistrate's own clerk, there was no trained service on which the central

government could rely to carry out its orders in the countryside. But the members of the Parliament at Westminster trusted the Justices of the Peace just because they were squires like themselves. Parliament, indeed, might be called the grand national Quarter Sessions. And so Statute after Statute thrust new duties upon the amateur magistrates. For example, in 1702 an Act gave to the Justices assembled in Quarter Sessions the power of assessing every town or parish for the upkeep of bridges, at a rate not exceeding threepence in the pound. Police work, petty justice, the poor law, and every function of local government depended upon the same magistrates. Without a staff of specialists through whom to work, the Justices of the Peace were not, judged by our later standards, equal to the proper performance of all their tasks. English freedom and the old English dislike of taxes and officialdom were not conducive to perfectly efficient administration.

Nothing better illustrates the inadequacy of the governmental machine than the state of the prisons. Because Quarter Sessions would have found difficulty, financial and other, in maintaining the gaols as public institutions with a

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staff of public officers paid out of the rates, therefore the prisons were farmed out to gaolers of the type of Lucy Locket's father. This system prevailed both in London and the provinces. The prisoners were absolutely at the mercy of these sharks, who had paid the authorities high prices for the post of gaoler and recouped themselves by practising extortion on the victims committed to their charge. The prisoner, on arrival, was struck in irons, which were only removed on payment. If he could not or would not pay 'the garnish money,' at Newgate, he was removed to the cell known as 'Tangier,' and there he was 'stript, beaten and abused in a very violent manner.' The poorer prisoners, and above all the debtors, suffered the worst; and innocent men or discharged debtors often remained in prison for years after they might otherwise have been free, solely because they had no means of paying the prison fees which they had incurred. Men and women were often kept without bedding, and almost without food, till they died of ill-usage or found friends to pay their 'garnish.' In 1711 Mary Pitt, in the Gatehouse prison was 'thrown down a pair of stairs because she had no money to pay for a bed,' and was 'put

was almost poisoned¹ by the stink of a corpse fifteen days old.¹

Such enormities were, it is to be feared, as old as public justice itself, but they were beginning at long last to attract the indignation of philanthropists. In the reign of Anne reports were made and enquiries held into the conduct of gaolers, at least in London. But, as is well known, it was only at the other end of the century that Howard obtained the first effective measures of reform.

Such was the England of Queen Anne—a land of many faults and abuses, sadly wanting in the efficiency of its public organization, but not markedly inferior in that respect to other countries of the time, and superior to them in freedom and in the vigour and initiative of her individual citizens. The war that occupied the reign was destined to render England for the first time the acknowledged head of European civilization on its political side, in place of the France of the

¹ On the other hand, those prisoners who could pay well were, on the same principle, permitted to purchase extraordinary privileges, including that of absenting themselves under surety from the Fleet or King's Bench Prisons 'in a hackney coach privately,' or 'publicly with what they call a day-rule.' Macky, *Travel*, II, pp. 1-3, 234.

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Grand Monarch ; it was owing to this change in the distribution of power that free institutions and the spirit that must accompany their exercise began to take a leading place in the thought and aspiration of mankind.